

CELTICS

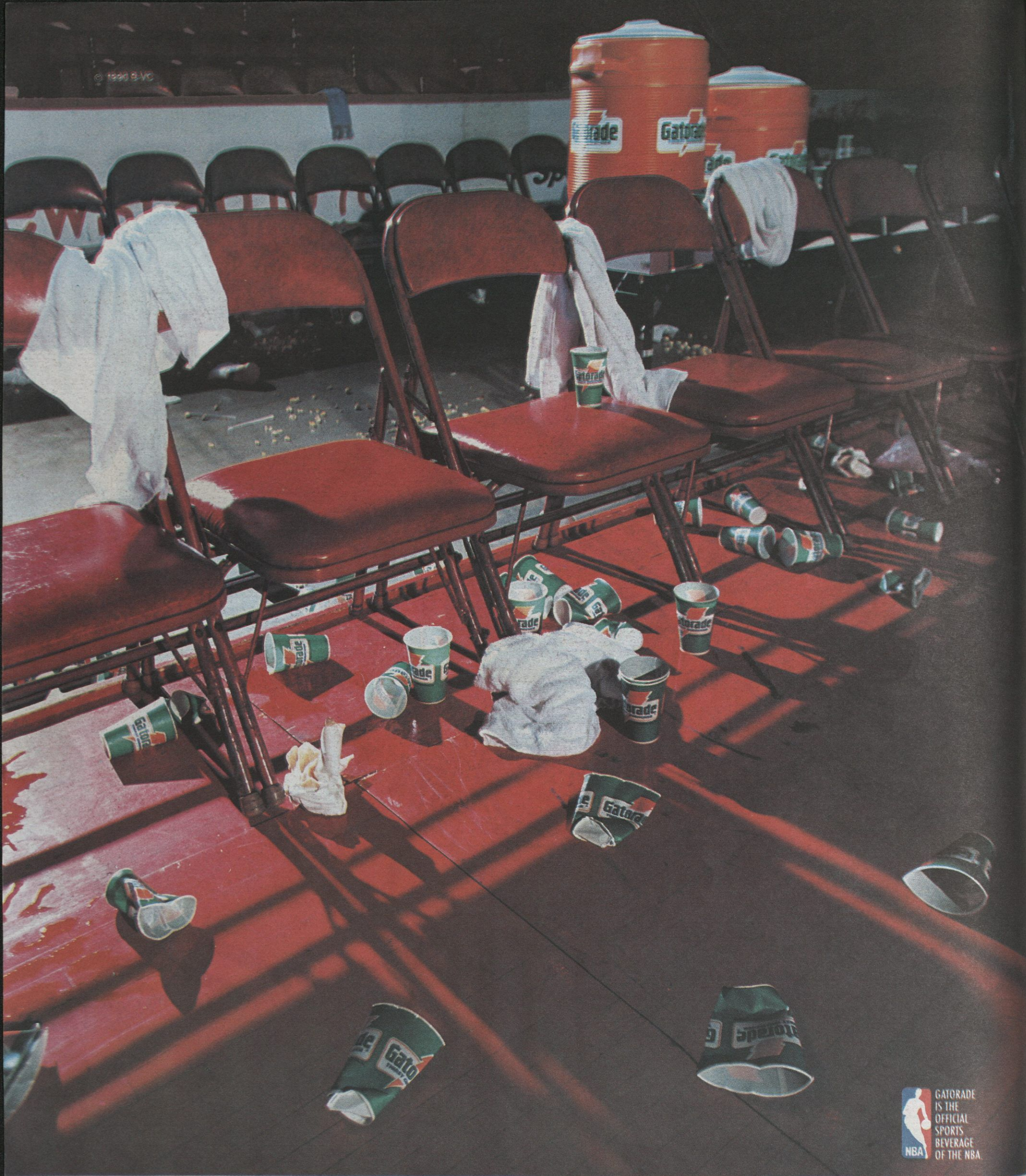
PRIDE

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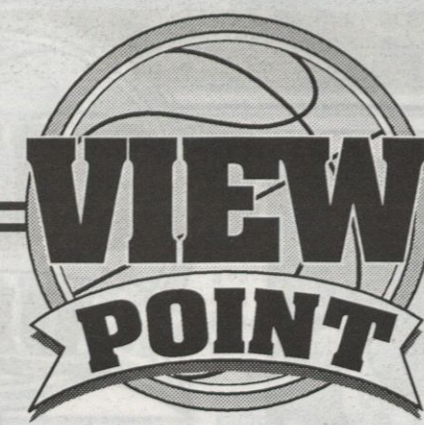
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Will Bird Fly Again?



The success of any team can be attributed to the strength of their bench.

CELTICS PRIDE



By Porter McKinnon

It is time for the NBA to take a strong look at the quality of the referees. The consistency of this group is ridiculous.

How can you call a hand checking foul out front when World War III is going on under the basket? The World Wrestling Federation would be proud of what is going on under the basket — and no (few) fouls are called. It has gotten to be a joke. What also is a joke is that most of the announcers try to justify the calls.

How can the NBA justify the muggings that are going on? Pick any game you want in the Chicago-New York series. The deliberate fouls were ridiculous. Someone is going to get seriously hurt.

Why is the same foul in Cleveland not a foul in Boston?

Did the NBA have a serious talk with the referees before game seven of the Chicago-New York series?

How did the NBA choose its referees for the playoffs?

Where do they get these guys, period?

I know that he is superman, but has anyone ever called an offensive foul on Michael Jordan?

Is there still a rule against traveling (steps) in the NBA?

Why did they get rid of the break-away foul?

These and many other questions will probably never get answered publicly by the NBA.

REFEREES MUST BE CONSISTENT

• • • • •

The results of the draft lottery definitely don't help the Celtics for the future. Keep in mind that Orlando is in their division and with the addition of Shaquille O'Neal, the Magic will soon be a very strong team. As you already know, the Nets are on the way up and if they name a coach who can get through to the players, who knows how good they can be?

In addition, you have the New York Knicks, who had an April wake-up call. The Knicks will be very dangerous now that they know they can play with the best. They are also in a decent position with the salary cap and will be able to make some meaningful changes to improve their team.

What does this all mean to the Celtics? It means that in order to stay competitive the Green Team is going to have to do a lot more than choose the twenty-first best player in the draft.

No team can produce a winner by only adding one player each year from the middle or end of the first round of the draft.

The Celtics are going to have to be aggressive. They are going to have to take some chances. It is time to build the team who can win championships three, four or five years from now.

There are a lot of questions to answer:

Which was the real John Bagley?

For the amount of money he'll be asking for, should he be signed again?

Can Kevin Gamble ever be effective during the playoffs?

Is Dee Brown really a point guard? He is a great athlete, but can he play the point?

What should be done with Sherman Douglas? Is he tradable? Probably not with the size of his contract. Can he learn to play under control? Can he learn to play defense?

Is it time to take advantage of Ed Pinckney's trade value and trade him for a younger player who can contribute or a decent draft choice?

Is it time to bite the bullet and retire Robert, Larry and Kevin and "reload" for the future? •

LINEUP

FEATURES

THE "NEW" GARDEN HAS FINALLY ARRIVED

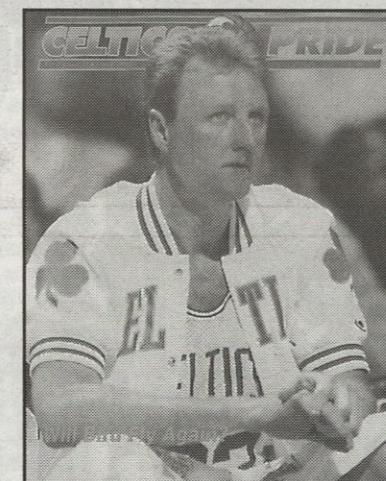
The day many New England sports fans liked to joke they'd never live to see is now all but assured to arrive by the fall of 1995 — there will be a new Boston Garden. Finally, this first class sports town will have a first class sports facility. The requisite \$160 million is in place and construction is scheduled to begin next spring on a new Boston Garden 100 yards behind what is already being referred to as the "old Boston Garden."

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HIS LEGEND IS GROWING

It seems out of every cloud there is a silver lining. However trite, in the case of rising starlet Reggie Lewis, it's true. It seems a twist of irony, if not fate, that Lewis has, over the years, twice benefited from the prolonged absence of Celtics captain Larry Bird. This season, in the absence of key players, falling one after another, Bird included, Lewis took his game, already meteorically rising, to yet another level.

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COVER

Well Larry, how about it? Can we expect you back? Larry Bird must have answered this question 200 times within the first hour after the Celtics 1992 off-season had officially begun. Sure the inquiries came in a variety of forms, but all were put forth in the hope of unearthing some insight. None of them succeeded. "See you in September" was all the 35-year-old basketball legend would say.

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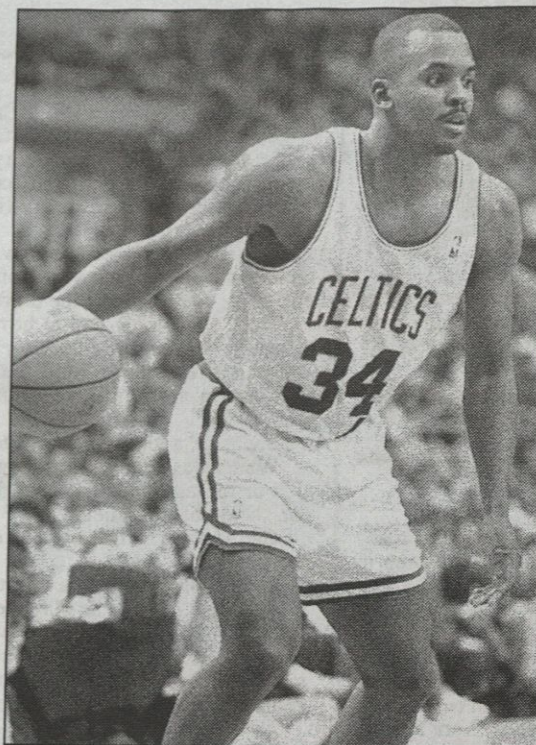
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Gamble was not effective offensively against Cleveland.

By Porter McKinnon

What About Next Year?

Dear Sound Off,

What are the Celtics going to do about bringing back Bird, Parish and McHale for next year? Except for game six against Cleveland, they really looked "old" in the playoffs.

It seemed like each of them can get "up" physically and mentally for one game, but that one game takes everything out of them and they can't play good for the next two or three games.

I didn't believe what Pete Vecsey said about Larry Bird hurting the chemistry of the team when he came back, but now I am starting to wonder.

Will they be back next year?

Stephen Nagy
Boston, MA

I am sure you either heard or read about Larry Bird's remarks about next year. He said he would let everyone know in September and not before. Kevin McHale has pretty much said the same thing.

Robert Parish has definitely stated that he will be back for two more years. He did look "old" to me also, but the fact is — he is old and injured. You are probably right that one good game takes so much out of him that he struggles in the next few games.

All three are under contract for next year. Dave Gavitt has publicly stated that he wants all three back. But what else would you expect him to say? He is in a tough spot.

If you remember, Larry said a number of times in the past that if this year was as painful as last year, he would not come back. This season definitely did not look any less painful to me. Therefore, I would expect him to retire.

My guess about Kevin McHale has to do with winning and losing. Kevin definitely does not need the money so his decision will probably be based on whether he thinks the

You are right about Kevin Gamble. You can't expect him to be able to defend the taller and stronger forwards that Cleveland has like Hot Rod Williams and Larry Nance, but you can expect him to be effective offensively. He was not effective.

Dave Gavitt and the Celtics management will have to take a long, hard look at this situation for the future.

You are definitely right. The playoffs are the only thing that really count.

Did Bird Hurt the Team?

Dear Sound Off,

Do you think that Larry Bird hurt the Celtics by coming back during the playoff series against Cleveland? Are they better off to let him just retire?

Bill McConnell
Manchester, NH

No, I don't think it hurt the Celtics to bring him back. Larry Bird makes everyone on the team better when he is in the lineup, even Reggie Lewis. His passing is always great, his knowledge of team defense always makes him effective.

Cleveland, as a group, was a team

SOUND OFF

Celtics can win next year or the year after. Winning is fun, losing is not. If Kevin doesn't think he'll be having a lot of fun — he won't be back.

Kevin did look much better at the end of the season, so if he decides to come back, I expect him to make a sizeable contribution.

Where Was Gamble?

Dear Sound Off,

It was a great end to the season, but it is still very disappointing to see the Celtics play such a bad game 7 against Cleveland.

Again, for the second year in a row, Kevin Gamble has not shown up for the playoffs. Everybody keeps suggesting that he is one of the Celtics' future nucleuses to build around. I disagree.

The regular season is relatively meaningless in the NBA. The only thing that counts is how you do in the playoffs. The Celtics beat a poor team (Indiana) and lost to a good team (Cleveland).

I, for one, can't stomach having to admit we are only one step better than Indiana. Actually, Indiana could have won just about every game. Bob Hill should be fired for his "non-coaching."

Something has to be done to get the Celtics back on at least an even plain with the good playoff teams.

Raymond Stearns
Hartford, CT

Bird's presence on the floor. In answer to your second question, I would have to say that, over the long run, they would be better off to let Larry and Robert retire. I think it is time to go to the next era. It is time to get more draft choices in order to draft and develop some young players for the future. It is time to make trades for young players who will develop.

Obviously, this would hurt the Celtics near term win-loss results, but it is time to bite the bullet. Do I think it will happen? NO WAY. This is a business, and the Celtics don't want empty seats. Also, as long as Red Auerbach is still around, I wouldn't expect any of their stars to be retired before they desire.

Who Will We Draft?

Dear Sound Off,

Now that we know that the Celtics will be drafting twenty-first, what or who do you think they will draft?

The last few years we have made great late first round choices with Reggie Lewis, Dee Brown and Rick Fox. Will there be anything good available when the Celtics' turn to draft comes?

Bonnie Weaver
Providence, RI

This year is generally regarded as a very deep draft, so the Celtics should

be able to help themselves. Whether they can acquire a future starter is another question. My guess is that in order to get significant help, they will have to trade up in the draft.

I understand that the Celts would love to have La Phonso Ellis of Notre Dame. He is an excellent, 6'9, 240 pound power forward who is a great defender and shot blocker. But I believe he will definitely be gone when the Celtics pick unless they move up in the draft. You have to expect the Celtics will go for a big man. There will not be many decent ones around for the twenty-first pick. Some possibilities are:

Robert Horry, a 6'9, 220 pound shooting forward from Alabama. He has the tools, but his attitude is questionable.

Oliver Miller, a 6'9 270+ pound power forward from Arkansas. He can shoot and handle the ball, but could be the NBA's version of Refrigerator Perry.

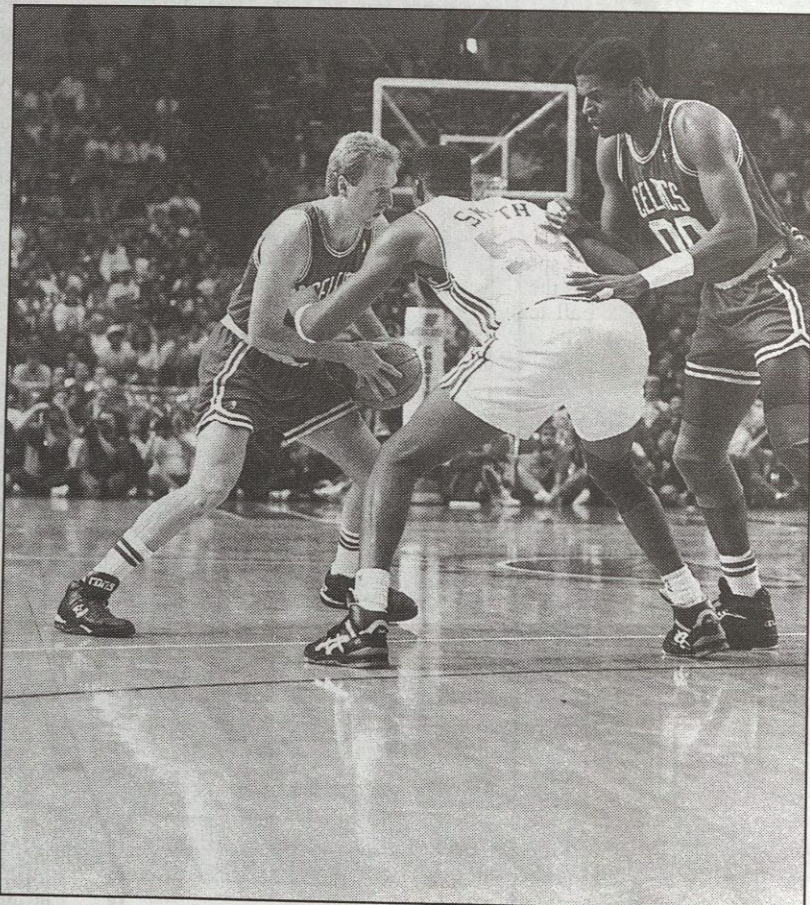
Popeye Jones, a 6'9, 260 pound power forward from Murray State. Good rebounder, but needs work on the rest of his skills.

David Booth, a 6'7, 190 pound shooting forward from DePaul. A little short for what the Celtics are looking for, but he can play. Very athletic; can penetrate and play defense.

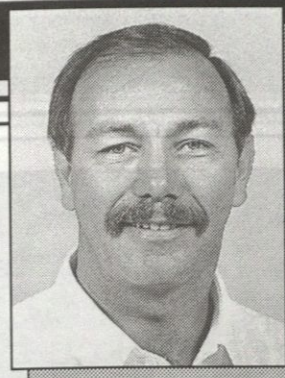
Matt Geiger, a 7'0, 235 pound center from Georgia Tech. A project, but may be worth the wait. Improving in all areas. Two years behind Robert might be what it takes to make him a good NBA center.

Eric Anderson, a 6'9, 225 pound power forward from Indiana. A Gavitt-type pick. Didn't have a sensational career under Bobby Knight, but he could blossom in the pros.

Obviously, who's available will determine their choice. The above names are just food for thought. •



Larry Bird makes everyone on the team better when he is in the lineup.



By Chris Ford

Basketball is a game of highs and lows, and in the playoff series with the Cleveland Cavaliers, we certainly had our share. Obviously, none of us felt in any way satisfied about the final result of the Cavaliers' series: the simple truth is in game seven, we didn't have it. From the very start of the 122-104 defeat, when we had a turnover on our first possession, I sensed we were in for a long afternoon. We just were not able to match the Cleveland Cavaliers' intensity that day, and our season had come down to a winner-take-all situation; the year ended prematurely.

Nevertheless, I'm proud of what we achieved this season. I believe we saw a number of players elevate their games this year, including players such as Eddie Pinckney, Joe Kleine, John Bagley and Rick Fox. Larry Bird made a great, valiant effort all season to battle to come back after serious back surgery, and Kevin McHale returned at the end of the season to play extremely well. Reggie Lewis developed into a player with legitimate superstar — and leadership — potential.

It shouldn't be forgotten that we looked forward to meeting the challenge of the Cavaliers with a sense of great anticipation. We had come off a very strong series against Indiana, sweeping a team that is arguably one of the three best offensive teams in the league. Reggie had stepped forward to become a leader, McHale's inside threat had returned, role players such as Bags, Eddie, Rick, Joe, Kevin Gamble and Sherman Douglas had all made important contributions. Against Chuck Person, Reggie Miller, Detlef Schrempf and company, our defensive aggressiveness had been the difference. We had held teams to an average of 97.3 ppg down the stretch of the regular season and we sustained that same level versus Indiana.

In our last column, I spoke briefly of some of the problems the Cavaliers posed for our basketball team; when they beat us 101-76 in game one, I felt that, in truth, what cost us most was a letdown, an emotional drop after we had won 20 of our 21 previous games. But it was more than that: Mark Price and Brad Daugherty burnt us repeatedly with their favorite pick-and-roll plays. Larry Nance had 24 points and 9 rebounds and John Williams was an important factor for them off of their bench, both on the boards and defensively. In a real sense, what the Cavaliers did in game one placed us on the defensive for the remainder of the series.

We would split the next four games, and if there was a pattern that emerged, it was this: when we were pushing ourselves exceptionally hard on the defensive end, we were able to do enough things to come away with the win. When we laid back and permitted Cleveland to take charge of the game with their potent offense and their imposing front-line, we just were not able to match up.

Game Two.. I said from the start

COACH'S CORNER

THE CLEVELAND SERIES

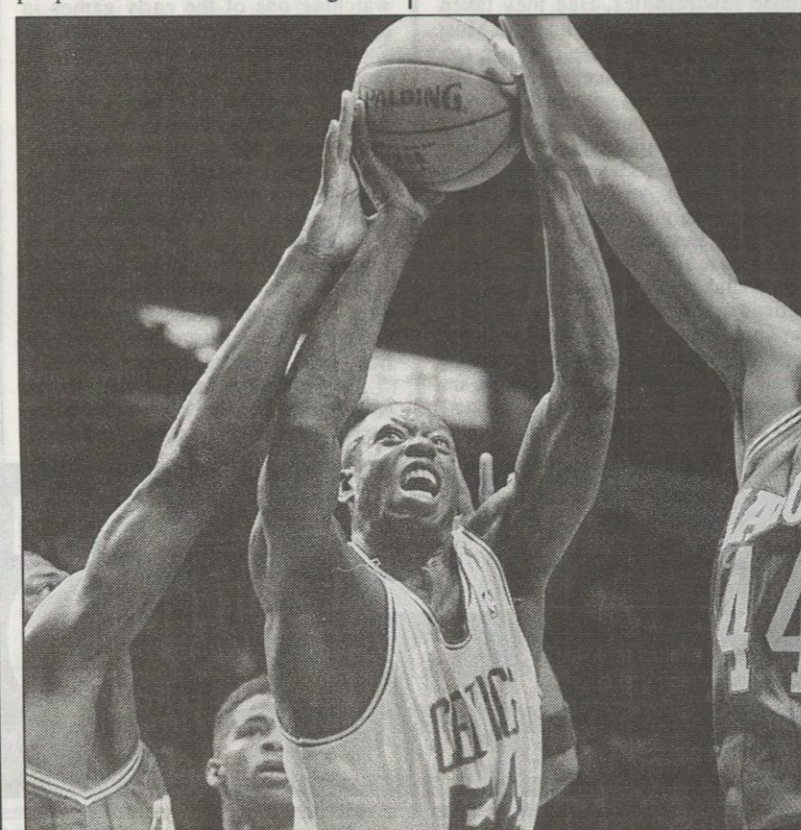
that since we had won in Cleveland twice during the regular season, we had confidence playing in the Coliseum. We won, 102-98, for three basic reasons. First, Robert Parish played with great intensity, and with emotion, which set up the second reason: our defense just would not allow people like Price, Nance or Craig Ehlo to shoot without a hand in their face.

Robert's big game gave our perimeter people confidence to challenge all

advantage. I was happy to have Larry Bird back in uniform and available; I've said he makes us a better team and I believe that.

You do wish that sometimes the game is as easy as just going out there and playing, team versus team. But in the super-charged atmosphere of the playoffs, every move is under a microscope, both by fans and the addi-

tional media who cover the post-season. Yes, it did take some time for Larry to



Eddie Pinckney elevated the level of his play this year.

night. Third, we executed our offense, and I felt that Reggie was able to shake free and Kevin McHale was provided post-up chances because of the way Bags and Sherman read situations. We came home for a Friday-Sunday pair feeling good about our chances.

Game Three. We won it, 110-107, with Reggie taking over down the stretch and starring with a 36 point performance. It was a game we narrowly won, taking the lead down the stretch as Reggie either scored over Ehlo or double-teaming or fed off to Dee Brown, who played a great comeback game for us. We won it with Reggie, and with a great, hustling 21-6 margin on the offensive boards. But it was tenuous; what hurt us was that Nance continued to step out and hit the 17' jumper. We'd known of their front-court's obvious abilities underneath; Larry Nance's sharpshooting was another factor we had to contend with heading into the last part of the series.

Game Four. It was a pivotal game, a Cleveland (114-112 OT) victory in which they reclaimed their homecourt

fit back into the lineup and it was an adjustment for all of us. But I think we all handled it (his return) capably, and played hard, to our potential.

Because in truth, we lost the all-important Garden fourth game because we failed to take charge defensively. Underneath, after doing such a powerful job on the offensive boards in the previous game, we couldn't follow up. There was a defensive breakdown in permitting Price, Williams and particularly Nance room to maneuver out on the wings, and taking it in on individual drives. So frequently, playoff games are won or lost on momentary lapses; in a very tense game, we led 103-99 on a Bags' jumper off a double-team against Reggie. There was 1:16 left and what was needed was one stop.

We didn't get it.

Price immediately broke us down and scored a driving layup and his score changed our strategy. Instead of drawing the ball out, we were forced to attack, but Nance rose up for them and blocked Robert's offensive rebound attempt. Cleveland tied it for the OT

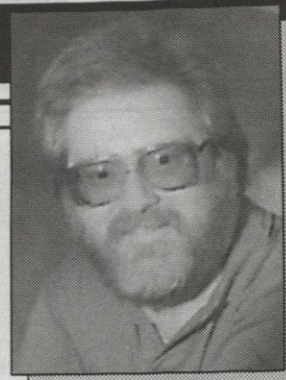
and won it on the strength of a 10-1 run.

Game Five. People called this the "pivotal" game of the series, and I thought it was — on paper. Cleveland won it easily, 114-98. We were flat, and though it shouldn't happen at this time of the year, sometimes it does happen with this team. I can't explain it. Basketball is a game of momentum, and in the middle stages of the series the Cavaliers took it. If we had trouble with Nance on Sunday, in game five both Daugherty and Ehlo stepped up their game to set us back. We hit the low spot of our post-season; after a stirring start, we fell behind by 8 at the half and, after a brief third quarter rally behind John Bagley, Cleveland out-worked us inside and exploded out to a 90-72 lead. It had come full circle: after working hard to take the lead in the series, we had regressed. Craig Ehlo was hitting shots because we were helping out in other areas. Yet, we weren't reading, or communicating. What's needed in that situation is for an aggressive charge by one of the defensive post people from the side Ehlo's shooting from. But we were hesitant — Cleveland took the lead in the series, 3 games to 3 because they had taken us out of our own game. Unlike in games two and three when we were challenging everything defensively and on the boards, we'd let their strengths take over. And I told our players that in the locker room after that loss in Cleveland: yes, we were going back to the Garden, but the homecourt would not mean anything if we didn't overcome our problems defensively. There wasn't any reason, or point, to single out a player who wasn't performing. Everyone had to elevate their game.

Game Six: I was intent, going into game six, to constantly challenge our guys, and I was proud of the way that they responded. The key to our 122-91 win was Larry. After years and years in this business, I've come to understand the pressures of the media and how you have to control your own response to what's said and written. Yet, I was stunned by some of the things that were implied concerning Larry, that his play could detract from our team effort. People forget quickly. This is Larry Bird; Larry is about team, and in game six, despite his bad back, his passing and court presence literally controlled the game. We jumped out to an early 36-22 lead, and we repeatedly turned back Cleveland's challenges. We were very determined; if Cleveland was whipping us with their pick-and-roll, we would not allow them any freedom to maneuver throughout. We sent people to jump at their shooters from the weak side of the floor and we were able to do this because our rotations were so solid. And it was because we hustled all night.

Game Seven: Some nights you just don't have it. I was surprised we were defeated by such a large score, but the Cavs played as well as we did in game six. They adjusted well to the threat of Larry Bird, and Mark Price continually pushed the ball up the floor, literally outrunning our entire team at some points. We played hard and our intensity was there at the start. But when the opposition is too much for you in some games, you do look bad. Obviously we were profoundly disappointed. Here, anything short of the world championship is a bitter pill to swallow. And yet, we had some very proud moments this year and I told the players that. We have some positive things to build on for next year. •

COLOR IT GREEN



By Jim Bianchine

On a faithful Sunday not long ago, the soft strains of the bugle gently graced the air. It was the sound of taps on yet another Celtics season without a World Championship.

Reactions have been varied since their Game 7 Eastern Conference semifinal loss to Cleveland.

Usually in such times, there are those who must forgive and those who must forget.

In this case, there is absolutely nothing to forgive.

Certainly the way the Celtics stormed back to win the Atlantic Division title and swept through the Indiana Pacers set you up for a big letdown after you got your hopes all pumped up, but they in fact may have accomplished far more than they rightfully should have.

Let's forget their accomplishments in light of the fact that Larry Bird missed 43 games, Kevin McHale 26 and Dee Brown 51.

Against Cleveland, the Celtics were a team that may have simply run out of gas both physically and mentally.

Certainly there will be gripes by some. About the only real bitch should be centered around where the series was lost by the Celtics.

Harken back to the final minutes of Game 4. The Celtics had finally opened a little daylight with about eight minutes left, going up by five. In the final minutes they still held a 4-point lead, only to see the Cavs come back, force overtime and win.

The series was really decided in those few minutes. Had they taken care of business, who knows? Most likely they would be playing the Chicago Bulls as you are reading this.

For those living outside the reaches of Boston's all-sports radio format on WEEI, you simply wouldn't believe some of the next-day reactions to the Celtics loss. Among those inane drones, some even called for the trade of Reggie Lewis.

I know this year's Celtics team could make you crazy, but some are actually certifiable.

Other reactions, which I will not present you with because you may be eating and I don't want you to choke on a chicken bone, would simply astound you. I'm sure you can just imagine.

REACTIONS HAVE VARIED

Those who engage mouth before brain, and even a certain segment of grim reapers among the media, are calling for sweeping changes. When you get right down to it, all but one team in the NBA — the champion — feels the need for major change. It is the cry of 26 losers.

While sharing thoughts with you, some things need to be said.

There is absolutely NO disgrace

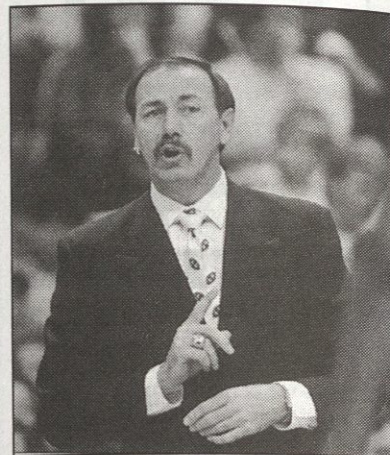
in losing to the Cavs. In fact, while watching one of the early games in the series, something came to mind.

I felt that if the Celtics were in fact destined to lose, it would be far easier to swallow to a team with both respect and class, than to have fallen to the brash, taunting, smirking, generally obnoxious bunch from Indiana. I scribbled a note while watching the Celtics lose Game 5 in Richfield.

Borrowing a line from Rod Stewart, "every picture tells a story, don't it?"

In the later stages of the final period, with their mates taking it squarely on their collective chins, there sat the Big Three, solemn in posture.

Not only were they glaringly absent from such a big game down the home stretch, but the most storied frontcourt



Ford pulled a classy move when he started Larry in Game 6.

in basketball history may well have painted a very symbolic picture.

Speculation over the next three months will be rampant concerning the future of Mr. Bird. My only feeling, at least for now, is simple. Leave him the hell alone and let him contemplate.

Game 6 of the Cleveland series prompted yet another scribble. Amidst controversy, coach Chris Ford, whose effort this season was nothing short of superb, elected to start Bird.

I don't give a hoot what anyone says, and knowing Chris, he probably will flash his wry grin before denying it, but I believe Ford did a classy thing that went very unnoticed.

Ford was well aware of the very

Continued on Page 18

The "New" Garden Has Finally Arrived

The Celtics Appear to Have a New Home for the 1995-96 Season

By Mike Spellman

The day many New England sports fans liked to joke they'd never live to see is now all but assured to arrive, as, by the Fall of 1995, there will be a new Boston Garden.

Finally, this first class sports town will have a first class sports facility. The requisite \$160 million is in place and construction is scheduled to begin next Spring on a new Boston Garden 100 yards behind what is already being referred to as the "old Boston Garden," with the opening slated in time for the beginnings of the Bruins' and Celtics' 1995-96 seasons.

"Three more years?" considered 74-year-old Celtics President Red Auerbach at the May 7 press conference in the 'old Garden' where the new Garden plans were unveiled. "I'll make it."

Funding for the long awaited project was provided by three prominent Boston based banks — Shawmut National Corporation, Bank of Boston and Fleet Bank of Massachusetts — who kicked in \$40 million apiece. The final \$40 mil will come from the Delaware North Company, which owns both Boston Garden and the Bruins.

Delaware North is pouring \$17 million of its own money into the new Garden, while roughly \$15 mil more will be supplied through an eminent domain settlement the corporation worked out with the state over the seizure of a section of the old Garden as part of the central artery depression project. The remainder of Delaware North's share will be funneled in over time via a series of tax breaks offered by the city during the

next 10 years as an added inducement for building the new facility.

For the last quarter century or so, the ramshackled old barn in Boston's North End has stood as a symbol for great pride but also a source of great embarrassment to the sports fans of this region of the country.

Built in 1928 at a cost of \$4 million, the Boston Garden has been the home of the Celtics and the Bruins for their respective 16 and five successful championship runs, as well as innumerable other exciting near misses. In fact, a compelling argument can be made that more truly great sports memories have come out of this ugly old grayish brown edifice than any other sports arena in the world. So, invariably, there will be a touch of sadness when the Celtics and Bruins make the move to the new Garden.

"It's like I've always said, there's tremendous nostalgia involving this place," said Auerbach, who has toiled in one capacity or another in the Celtics' hierarchy and at the Garden for the last 41 years. "But you just can't live in yesterday's world. If I had lived in the past, it wouldn't have helped me build for the future."

Naturally, just about everyone who has had some sort of connection to the Celtics or Bruins in modern times feels the same as Red. In the hopes of appeasing as many people as possible, however, the new Garden developers will attempt to combine the best of both worlds — mixing state of the art luxuries, improvements and construction (including air conditioning, more seats, greater comfort, a multi-million dollar video scoreboard, a below ground parking garage, a two story

restaurant overlooking the action, no obstructed view seats and a larger ice surface for hockey) while preserving as much of the proud Boston Garden heritage as possible (keeping the Bruins and Celtics banners and the Celtics' trademark parquet floor).

For basketball, the plans call for there to be 18,400 seats, 3,510 more than present, and this figure does not include the 1,000 or so obstructed view seats in the old Garden. There will also be 2,752 more seats for hockey (14,448 to 17,200) and 4,091 more for concerts (15,509 to 19,600).

One of the leaps into the glitzy world that is today's NBA will be the addition of 104 12 to 14-seat luxury suites costing from \$131,500 to \$211,000 apiece and 2,300 "club" seats in the new Garden going for between \$8,100 and \$9,100 per year.

According to a report in the *Boston Globe*, among those who have already signed on to lease the suites are Coca-Cola, John Hancock, Nynex, BayBank and ITT Sheraton. The Celtics organization is committed to buying 10 of these high priced private rooms, which will be used to attract advertisers.

The suites, which can be leased for either 5 or 7 years, will be available to a single owner for all regular season Bruins and Celtics games, as well as two exhibition games and up to 14 playoff contests for each team. They will be located halfway above court-side and feature such amenities as padded chairs, two TV sets, wet bar, ice maker, refrigerator, telephone, private restroom and retractable glass wall.

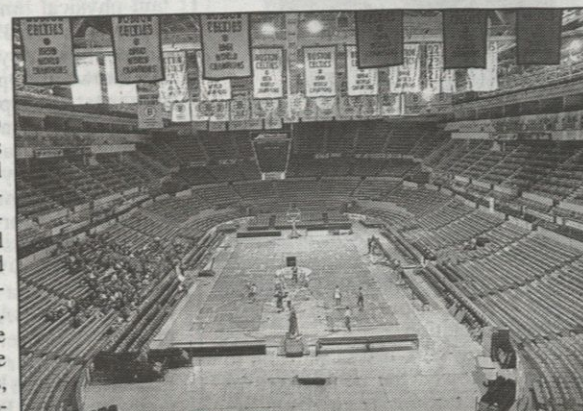
The suite lease will also include two parking spaces in the underground parking garage that is already being built beneath the new Garden site for all Bruins and Celtics games, the first right to purchase the same seats for concerts and other events, a private entrance with access to exclusive elevators and escalators, catering service and membership into the private club inside the above court restaurant.

The "Club" seats will be located just below the suites and go for about \$35 less per game and, naturally, offer fewer amenities. They will come with VIP reservations to some other garden events, private elevators, in seat food and beverage service and an option to rent a parking space.

Of the remaining additional seats, approximately 700 will be reserved for new season ticket sales. The waiting lists for season tickets are currently at 5,500 for the Celtics and 4,100 for the Bruins.

The regular admission seats will either be the 21 rows just above court-side or the 14 rows in the upper balcony.

The designs for the new Garden call for the seats to be not as close to the action as the current Garden, but



A compelling argument can be made that more truly great sports memories have come out of the Boston Garden than any other sports arena in the world.

considerably nearer than in most modern arenas.

Many economists are saying that the willingness of the three local banks to make such a large investment reflects a growing confidence that the Massachusetts and New England economies are turning around after slumping steadily over the last several years — a happening that conventional wisdom suggests should translate into a stabilization of the region's big banks.

"These institutions have confidence in this region," offered Fleet President Leo Breitman at the May 7 gala gathering. "We are ready to roll and I think this commitment says that."

Echoed Bank of Boston President Charles Gifford. "This is a great statement about where these banks think they're headed."

Though the funding was no doubt a direct result of the perceived economic resurgence, as those above assert, it is quite possible that the financing agreement would not have been reached, at least at this time, had there not been reports of serious talks between developers and the Toyo Bank of Japan regarding a possible Garden project just weeks before the final agreement. Toyo representatives eventually backed out of discussions on their own, but not before catalyzing the new Garden movement.

"When it became known in the Boston banking community that the Toyo Bank was making considerable progress toward making a deal, the story played a role in triggering Boston banks' interest in the project," observed John Connolly, Development Adviser to Boston Mayor Ray Flynn.

Beyond the new Garden itself, state and city officials are confident that the project will provide a boost for the economy. In particular, it is hoped the ultra-modern facility will spark a revitalization movement in the immediate area around the Garden, with a retail center, high rise office buildings and hotels being among the changes envisioned.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the new Garden, ignored by many big promoters in recent years for obvious reasons, will become a major venue for concerts and sporting events, such as the NCAA tournament and NBA and NHL All-Star games. ●

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By Kevin C. Doyle

Some playoff post-mortems:
Boston is generally regarded as a city with some of the most knowledgeable and discerning fans in the world of sports — fans who understand and appreciate subtlety and nuance.

For the most part, it is a well-deserved reputation.

That being said, it was startling to hear how skewed the perspective of some had become regarding the return of Larry Bird to the lineup against the Cleveland Cavaliers.

One dopey caller after another phoned the various sports talk shows suggesting that, somehow, Bird's presence would be a hindrance rather than a help. According to some, Bird would disturb the chemistry. Others said that players who made large contributions in Bird's absence would be unjustly denied minutes upon his return.

Hey, is it me, or what?
Am I a bit dense? What am I missing?

Since when does the return of a future Hall of Famer to active duty hurt a team?

HALFCOURT PRESS

There are certain physical limitations to Bird's game these days. He knows it. Opponents attempt to exploit them. Nevertheless, as one of those players who spans eras, Bird has forgotten more basketball than 99 percent of the current crop of NBA players will ever learn or understand.

Rather than being viewed as a disruptive presence, Bird should have been seen as a welcome addition. There's nothing wrong with the man's head.

After a cameo appearance in Game Four against Cleveland and modest contributions in Game Five, Bird was back in the starting lineup for Game Six. Sixteen points and 14 assists later, the Celtics had a 31-point win and a shot at Game Seven.

Some hindrance, eh?
Coach Chris Ford knew Bird was ready to return.

"I just thought he was ready from looking at him and getting his body sense and the look that he had the last couple of days," said Ford.

"I wouldn't want anyone else in a big

FANS SHOULDN'T QUIT ON BIRD

game (other) than Larry Bird on my team. It's a shame a lot of people have short memories," he added.

Ditto for Kevin McHale. "People always ask me why we had trouble winning without Larry. You saw why. Larry doesn't need to score much. It's his ability to pass the ball and to

play good team defense — all those things that made Larry Bird a great player for years," said McHale after the Celtics' 122-91 Game Six blowout.

Yet, for whatever reason, some fans chose to take a what-have-you-done-for-me-lately stance instead of clamoring for Bird's return and hoping he could add to his considerable legend.

Perhaps Bruins' fans are more knowledgeable. When their superstar defenseman Ray Bourque was sidelined for a portion of the Stanley Cup playoffs, the hockey fans appreciated what the team accomplished in his absence, but also recognized the need for his speedy return.

Bird chose not to dignify his critics' assessments and flew the coop without a remark following Game Six.

Will he return for another year? After the final loss to Cleveland, he said he'd let everyone know in September. In his mind, he knows the direction his future will take but he's not set to divulge that information.

The guessing is, his final decision will depend a great deal on how he feels following the Summer Olympics in Barcelona. He won't play unless he's pain-free and at the top of his game.

In the meantime, those alleged fans should use the next four months to ponder what Bird has meant to the franchise for the past 13 years.

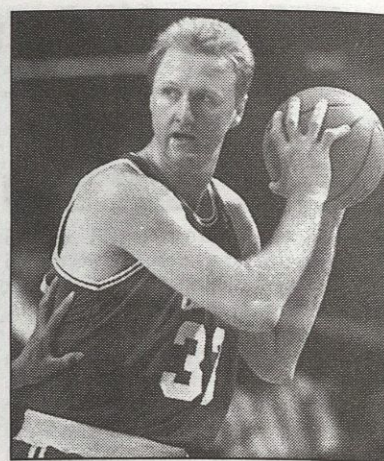
THE PRICE WAS RIGHT: Dissect the numbers and the match-ups any way you like, but Mark Price proved to be the ultimate difference for the Cavaliers.

The reason? His quickness, nifty ballhandling and ability to spread the court and create seams in the Celtics' defense led to a monster series for the Cavs' front-court trio of Brad Daugherty, Hot Rod Williams and Larry Nance.

The Celtics' calling card during the final month of the regular season was a stifling help defense that swallowed up opponents on a nightly basis. In their three wins in the series, Boston held the Cavs to 98.7 ppg. However, in the three Cleveland routs at home, the Cavs posted an average victory margin of 19.7 points while pouring in 115.7 points per game. That's an astonishing difference.

The Celtics knew what had to be done in order to take Game Seven.

"We've got to come ready to play like we did tonight. Pre-game talks from coaches at this point don't mean a hill of beans. I think it's individually what they have inside them," Ford



How could Bird have been a disturbance to this team?

noted after Game Six.

"We have to be ready to compete with them. They're too good not to compete with. We have to fight like dogs if we want to win the game. Everybody has to be picking up, playing good D. We have to get after it and try to stay on top of them," said McHale.

Yet, the Celtics simply had nothing left for that final confrontation. Much of it had to do with the huge contributions of the diminutive Price, who controlled the tempo from the get-go.

LEWIS' STAR BLAZES: Celtics' diehards seem to finally realize that, after five years of hiding in Bird's shadow, Reggie Lewis is finally getting equal billing on the parquet stage.

And deservedly so. "Reggie is a complete player in every sense of the word. He's reached the next level. The guys want the ball in his hands — he's definitely the go-to guy," said Ford.

In the seven-game dance with the Cavs, Lewis accounted for a series high 197 points (28.2 ppg) — including a 36-point burst in Game Three and a splendiferous 42-point explosion in the OT loss in Game Four.

"The guy can score from anywhere possible. It's amazing — he's a great player," remarked Dee Brown.

What Lewis has developed is the scorer's ability to create space for himself in order to get off the uncontested shot. And he's become equally adept at sticking the open jumper or putting the ball to the floor for a slashing drive, a double-edged sword for defenders.

It would seem all-star will become a permanent adjective in front of his name.

HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE?: McHale had the following response when asked about the role of experience in Game Seven:

"Experience is a factor only if you go out there and play well. If experience were a factor, we'd bring back Havlicek and Russell, but they're a little old for that. Me, Larry and Robert — that's enough old guys.

"(Game Seven) is not about where you play, but how you play. You've got to come out and play with a lot of determination and a lot of aggressiveness."

Unfortunately, that never happened, leaving a flat taste to an otherwise memorable season in which the Celts scrapped for everything they got.

"It was disastrous — they stuck it to us and we never got back," McHale concluded.

By Bob Schron

Former Celtic Quinn Buckner (1982-85) has risen to become one of the top analysts in basketball television.

He was a backup guard in Boston in 1984, playing there until being exchanged for the rights to Jerry Sichting before the 1985-86 season.

Buckner's rise in broadcasting has been due to strong, secure and precise qualities he brought to basketball as a player, and as a leader. Buckner was involved with the Players' Association on the executive level as a player and it's undoubtedly because of the respect he had from his colleagues off the floor as well as on it, that he has succeeded as well as he has in his work with NBC.

It isn't unusual for players to bypass other media and speak exclusively with Buckner, something Buckner is conscious of, though he doesn't attempt to unfairly exploit this advantage. At a recent practice at Brandeis, for example, Buckner was trying to hustle interviews with his former teammates, just as others in the media were doing that day. He appeared to be very much part of the media now, working the C's very accomplished PR staff as others were trying to. Buckner worked with ESPN, cable stations and CBS, doing the NCAA's, before working with Bob Costas on NBC's studio shows this season.

CP: How were you able to be a prominent broadcaster on both CBS during the NCAA Tournament and, at the same time, turn up on its

INNERVIEW

QUINN BUCKNER HAS SPECIAL RAPPORT WITH PLAYERS

rival, NBC, doing the NBA?

QB: I'm grateful — the NBC role grew appreciably during the season. It was in my contract that I could work games with CBS, as well as work in the studio with NBC. The only problem was with the NCAA. But they didn't raise an objection, though they could have.

CP: What's the difference between covering college and professional ball?

QB: There really isn't a whole lot of difference between the games per se. My role is different, though — I'm in the studio with NBC. There's much more preparation involved, because when you're broadcasting the game, the game sort of speaks for itself, and you're there to call it. In the studio, I'm prepared for every question — my responses are planned out.

CP: What's been the key to your success?

QB: I think it's premature to say I'm very successful, though I appreciate what you imply. This season, the breakthrough for me was my Christmastime exclusive interview with Larry (Bird, which ran in two parts). I think that conversation, the rapport I had with Larry, who's a very close friend of mine, helped insure my credibility.

CP: What's your sense of Larry and his future?

QB: Right now, I think Larry is in a very contemplative mood concerning his future. I think that after he was sitting out for so long, he was doing what most players do: he was feeling anxious, anxious to get back out there on the floor and start playing again.

For the future, I honestly believe he's

taking it one step at a time. First, he's finishing the playoffs, then he'll go out and play on the Olympic team. I think that during the summer, when everything is quieter, he'll then step back and take a good look at things. I'm uncertain that even he knows what's in his future plans.

CP: There was so much speculation regarding Bird this playoff season, i.e., whether the team might possibly be better without him because of the way

they finished the regular season and the way they played in the Indiana series. What was your assessment?

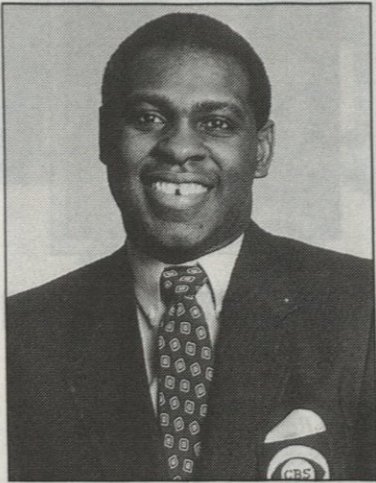
QB: Oh, I think the Celtics believed in Larry and I think they all said they needed him in order to win the championship. He created a number of problems for Cleveland when he was out there. He set guys up with his passing, he made the halfcourt game more effective because of the spacing he created with his presence, and this was critical, because in the playoffs the game generally is played in the halfcourt. In my view, Larry makes the Celtic's offense much more potent because it's multidimensional; there was Larry and the Big Three, there was Reggie and there were the contributions by players such as Kevin Gamble and Dee Brown.

CP: There was a sense of confidence going into the Cleveland series from the Celtics' side; they had defeated Cleveland twice in Cleveland, a place where they had always had difficulty winning.

QB: Yes, but in those important games, Cleveland played without Brad Daugherty and without Larry Nance. I thought, going into that series, that Cleveland's most difficult problem to overcome would be the experience factor. The Celtics' Big Three had played an equivalent to a full season in playoff competition. The Cleveland franchise hadn't reached the second round of the playoffs in sixteen years. I believed that, for Boston, there were two obvious keys. First, would the Celtics be able to adjust to Larry coming back so late? and second, Kevin McHale's successful return to action. Boston had no chance at all without Kevin to battle the frontline of the Cavaliers.

CP: But in the end, it was the Cavaliers who prevailed.

QB: And no real shocking surprise. I think Cleveland is conceivably the best team of the 1990's and the flip side of "experience" is how well you execute. The Big Three individually — Larry, Kevin and Robert Parish — are three men I consider close friends; yet, on the floor, as an athlete ages, there are just some occasions when he cannot get the body to do what his mind most (desperately) wants it to do. Game seven last week in Cleveland was such a day. It's difficult to swallow, but it's a hard fact of the athlete's life.



Quinn: "Finding the right position for Dee is a major concern for the team heading into the draft."

CP: You were rumored to be in line possibly for some type of position in management with the Bucks. Was that true?

QB: There were discussions. Yet, apparently, (the discussions) weren't as serious from their end as they might have appeared to be on my end. Was I interested (in a front office position)? Yes, I was, if the responsibilities and the commensurate salary were to both the team's and my own liking. I would have enjoyed the opportunity, and would still want to work in the front office of a team in the future if the right thing came up. But our perceptions were different obviously when it came to (power); you could see that when the team hired the coach before they hired the General Manager.

CP: Do you have a prediction for the Finals?

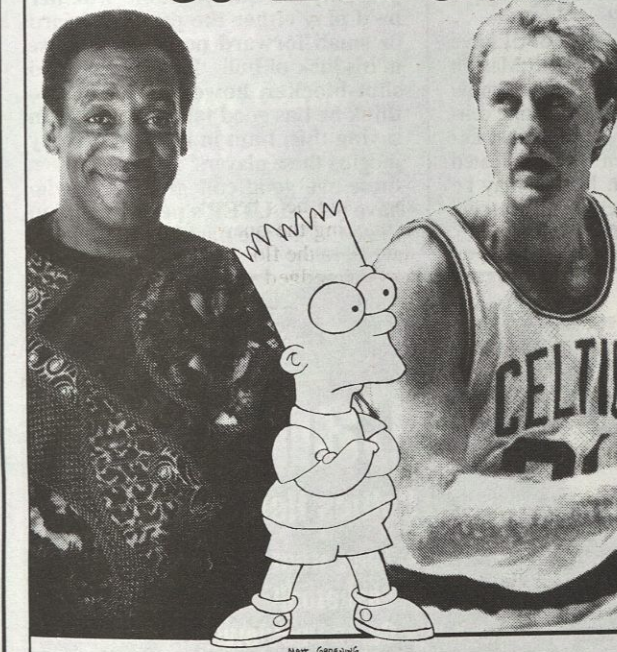
QB: Speaking this early, I'm predicting Chicago-Portland going into the conference finals. I think people on the east coast don't really appreciate the magnitude of Portland, an excellent team with a superstar in Clyde Drexler. I'm certain that those in the east don't know the west and vice versa, all that well. I think Cleveland was relieved to get by Boston, while Chicago received a major wakeup call against the physical Knicks. That physical series either was a positive in that it woke the Bulls up, or it was a negative and wore them down. If Cleveland can maintain a feeling of confidence all series against Chicago, they could win it. I wouldn't be surprised by that possibility. But I do lean towards a Chicago-Portland Finals.

CP: Do you have any thoughts regarding Boston's future?

QB: Oh, I think they do need help in the frontcourt, to augment the Big Three, whatever direction Larry, for example, might take regarding retirement. But there's uncertainty in the backcourt, too. I felt, because I don't think there's a final decision yet on Dee Brown's position. Sometimes he looked like a point guard, sometimes like a two guard. Bags deserved to be on the floor and has certainly earned a shot at playing next season. But I couldn't get a feel for Dee's position, and I think that has to be a concern for the team heading into the draft.

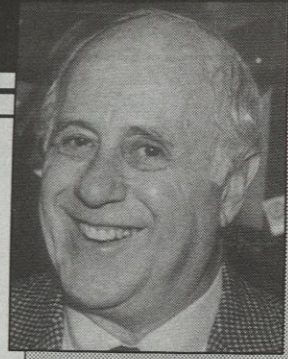
It affected this year's outcome, I thought. The pressure in the series against Cleveland was definitely on Chris (Ford). His toughest problem was deciding how to fit all of the guys into the lineup, and sustain the continuity the team had coming into the series. How could he best sustain their momentum? •

Bill, Bart & Bird.



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By Red Auerbach

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have a question for Red, please address your letters to Celtics Pride, 85 Old Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903.

Dear Red,

I've been a Celtic fan all of my life and have enjoyed reading *Celtics Pride* for a year. I am impressed with the efforts the organization has made to continue being successful in the 1990's.

I have two questions. First: what two or three things would you advise a 14-year-old player to become aware of when watching a Celtics' game? Second: is there a video available which portrays the Celtics' seven plays and options with some history on application to the various Celtic eras?

Dave Zuck
Bloomington, MN

Thank you for your kind letter. Regarding your first question, the emphasis for any young player should be on the fundamentals of the game, both on an individual and team level. As a Celtic fan, you are aware of all the great players who have played for the team through the years, and as fantastic as guys such as Bob Cousy, Bill Russell, Sam Jones, John Havlicek, Dave Cowens, Robert Parish and Larry Bird were, and are, you know that what contributed most to their success was their complete mastery of fundamentals. To simplify: Cousy was a brilliant passer, Russell an outstanding defensive player. Both received acclaim because of their grace, but in truth, all of their theatrics were possible because they were so much in control of the basics. Havlicek and Bird were (and are) leaders because of their superb all-around games, meaning they could shoot well, defend, pass and rebound. Neither were blessed with overwhelming athleticism, but could block out when rebounding,

ASK RED

pass crisply, and play excellent position defense. Sam Jones was a Hall of Fame player with great form on his shot. Dave also made the Hall; at 6'8-1/2, he compensated for his lack of height at center with hustle and strong fundamental play as a defender and a rebounder. Robert perfectly illustrates how critical to a team a role player can be. Robert Parish never received hype, or publicity, but he was vital to our success as a defender, an intimidator, a man who sets picks, and as a leader.

There are a number of good videos produced by NBA Entertainment on basketball and I'm proud of the ones that have been produced by our organization. The two I've done in recent years were one with Larry Bird, "Winning Basketball" and several segments on video "Red on Roundball," that were originally done on CBS, then on Turner Broadcasting.

Dear Red,

How come our number 1 draft choice, Rick Fox, hasn't seen much playing time in the playoffs? With all the experience he received at North Carolina, shouldn't he be able to handle the pressure of the NBA playoffs?

Charlie Pierce
Waltham, MA

I think fans generally don't understand what is required to win in playoffs, regarding how coaches utilize their bench. In my opinion, coaches can win with seven players in the playoffs, at times, eight. There just isn't enough playing time to attempt to fit everyone into your rotation against every team. I think you saw that in this season's playoffs, both in our victorious set against Indiana and when we got beat by Cleveland. In the first series, Chris Ford essentially went with an eight man rotation, and would swing Kevin McHale between power forward and center. We did struggle in the loss to Cleveland, and part of the cause of that was that we suddenly juggled our rotation when Larry and Dee Brown came back from injuries. In the playoffs, there is fre-

quently more rest between games, there is an additional focus your main guys have that makes fatigue less of a problem. There are more timeouts. Rick Fox had an excellent rookie season and confirmed our hopes, making the All-Rookie Team selected by the NBA. He helped us against Indiana and also versus Cleveland, for example, when he hit a 3-pointer in a limited stint in game four. We saw ourselves as being very strong this post-season; we finished strong and we then brought Larry and Dee back in time for our most crucial tests. It wasn't a negative reflection on Rick, or on players such as Sherman Douglas or Joe Kleine. There are just so many minutes to allot during the playoffs, that's all.

Dear Red,

First, congratulations on your book! Secondly, congratulations on your genius in your choices in recent drafts, i.e., Reggie Lewis, Dee Brown and Rick Fox. I think it's very impressive, considering the late choices you've had. I'm very interested in what your plan is for this season, if you permit such information to be printed. I know such players as Shaquille O'Neal, Christian Laettner and Alonzo Mourning are out of reach, but do you see players such as Elmore Spencer or Popeye Jones as possibilities?

Being from El Paso, Texas, I have gotten to see the play of both Marion Maxey and David Van Dyke. I know Van Dyke is far from a dominating center, but he fared very well against Dikembe Mutombo when UTEP defeated Georgetown last year. Maxey may be only 6'8, but he's extremely aggressive in the paint! Could you comment?



Why didn't Fox receive more playing time?

Tim McDonald
El Paso, TX

We are beginning to evaluate the college talent more closely as of this writing, with information coming in from our scouts, headed by our national scout, Rick Weitzman. We don't reveal information about these matters; not only wouldn't it be fair to players we were considering, it would shortchange us because we would be tipping our hands, possibly to our competitors.

The two players from UTEP are fine athletes, and I think they are guys El Paso should take pride in. Maxey is projected as a power forward in the draft and he's a player who did help himself in the last half of his senior year in college. He is said to be a player with skills comparable to Tyrone Corbin, who has had a fine playoff season with the Utah Jazz. Van Dyke is, as you say, something of a puzzle in terms of position. At present, it's questionable whether he'd play either the power forward or small forward positions because of his lack of bulk. He is a respected shot-blocker, however, and we do think he has good talent. But even in saying this, I am in no way publicly judging these players' abilities. Rather, these are good college players who have helped UTEP's performance in the NCAA's the past few seasons. •

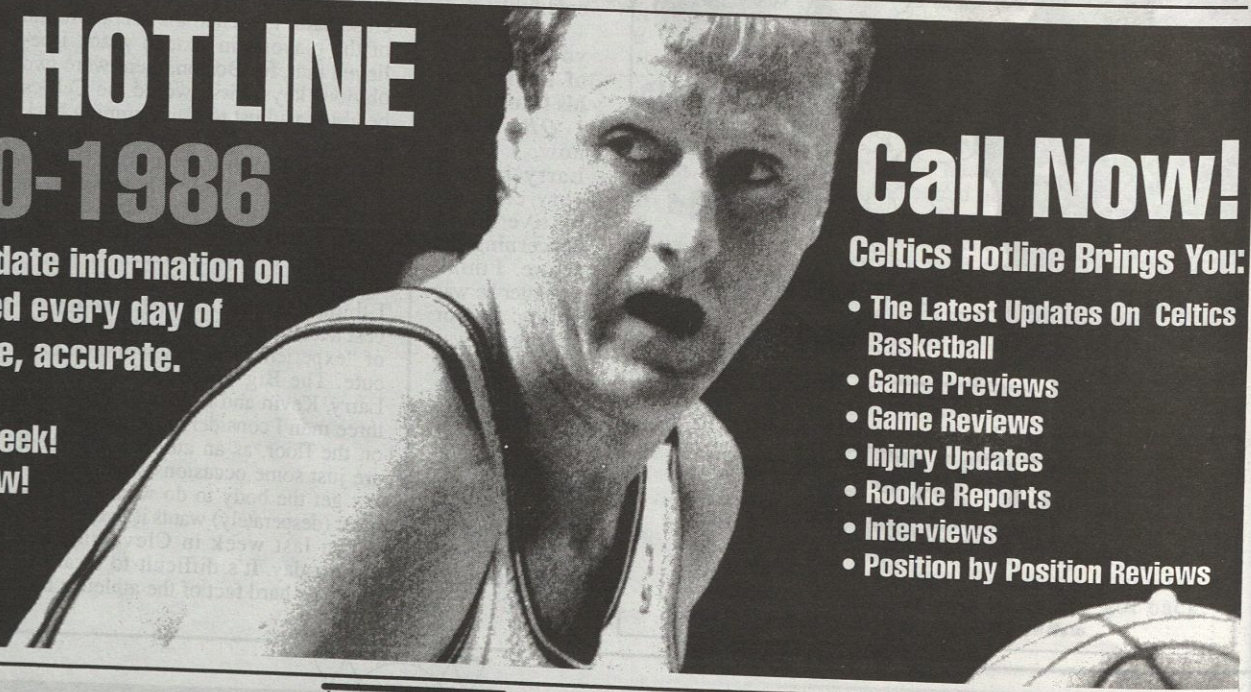
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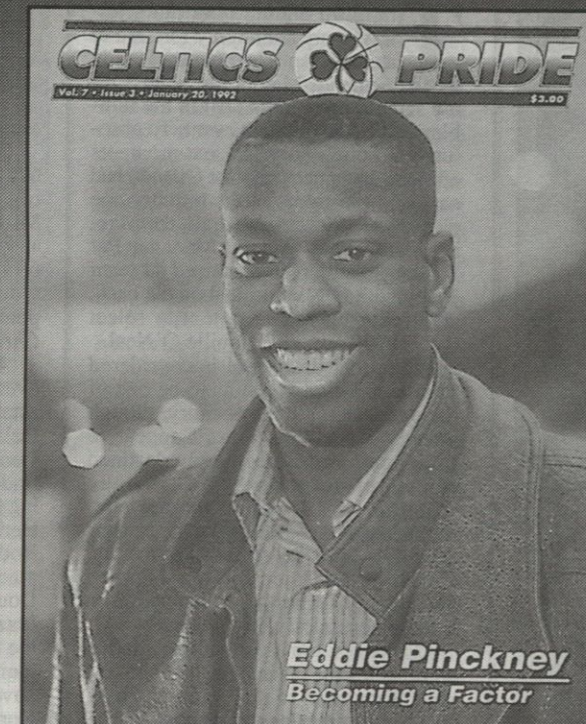
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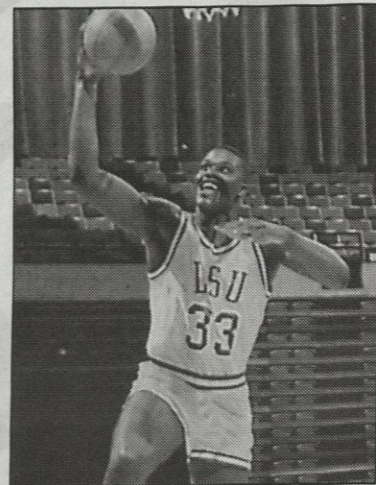
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Is Orlando big enough for Mickey Mouse and the Shack?

By Mike Spellman

The third annual ping pong lottery, more commonly referred to as the Shaquille-athon, was won by the Orlando Magic, the team with the second most balls (10) in the tumbler at the May 17 gala event. To absolutely no one's surprise, just moments after the announcement that Orlando had captured the rights to the number one pick in the 1992 college draft, the Magic's flamboyant General Manager Pat Williams held up an oversized #1 team jersey with O'Neal printed on the back, signifying his team's intent to select the 70-290 pound Shaquille O'Neal.

The 1992 draft pool is considered by the majority of scouts to be one of the deepest in recent memory, though after O'Neal there doesn't appear to be anyone who is seemingly destined for superstardom. Following the selection of O'Neal at number one, most insiders believe the next four selections will be Alonzo Mourning, Christian Laettner, Jimmy Jackson and Harold Miner — quite possibly, but not necessarily, in that order.

There is a great deal of speculation surrounding the other six lottery choices, with as many as 14 players having been mentioned prominently as possibilities to be one of the elite 11. Just about everyone believes that Walt Williams, Todd Day and Don MacLean have to be there somewhere, but rumors have also swirled around Byron Houston, Tom Gugliotta, Adam Keefe, Malik Sealy, Anthony Peeler, Tracy Murray, Clarence Weatherspoon, LaPhonso Ellis, Lee Mayberry, Bryant Stith and Elmore Spencer (the only other legitimate NBA type center available).

Also, as has been the case in recent years, there have been no shortage of trade rumors involving the ever coveted lottery choices, beginning with the top spot, as Shaquille has made his feelings clear that he would like to play in a major marketplace. Other teams said to be listening to offers for their pick are Sacramento, Philadelphia and Denver, as they each have dire positional needs that seemingly can not be met where they're picking. Uncertainty also surrounds Houston's draft pick and everything else connected to the team with

franchise center Hakeem Olajuwon being placed (by mutual consent) on the trade block.

But since no one can presume trades, here's one man's guess of how the lottery will unfold:

1) Orlando Magic (21-61) Needs: big man, a two guard who can shoot. **Analysis:** They needed another talented big body to join rookies Stanley Roberts and Brian Williams, and boy are they in a position to get just that and then some. If the Magic does indeed draft and sign Shaquille, the Roberts-Williams-O'Neal power forward-center rotation will be potentially one of the most awesome in NBA history. **Pick:** Shaquille O'Neal — C (70) LSU.

2) Charlotte Hornets (31-51) Needs: center, point guard, forward depth. **Analysis:** A dominant middle man like Shaquille would have seemingly been the final piece of the puzzle for this up and coming club, but considering they had only a 12 percent chance at picking this high, they'll probably take 6'10" paint monster Alonzo Mourning, who incidentally prefers center to power forward, without too much complaining. **Pick:** Alonzo Mourning — CPF (6'10") Georgetown.

3) Minnesota Timberwolves (15-67) Needs: power forward and shooting guard. **Analysis:** Neither Sam Mitchell nor Thurl Bailey are the answer at power forward. Laettner — 6'11", versatile and intense — is considered a bit of a gamble, but his potential is too great to pass on. **Pick:** Christian Laettner — PF (6'11") Duke.

4) Dallas Mavericks (22-60) Needs: everything. **Analysis:** The only two established standout players here are Rolando Blackman (33-years-old) and Derek Harper (31), and they're on the trade block as the Mavs continue trying to rebuild. The oft injured and aging Herb Williams (33), Fat Lever (32) and Rodney McCray (31) also must be replaced. The late season play of rookies Doug Smith, Donald Hodge and Mike Iuzzolino provides some optimism for the future, as did the efforts of former journeyman Terry Davis, who seems to have won a home in Dallas with his work on the boards (9.9 rpg). However, it is now safe to call 1988 lottery pick White a bust. Chances are the choice will be narrowed down to super athlete Miner and do-it-all specialist Jimmy Jackson. Seeing as they need everything, including a team leader to take over for Blackman, I'm guessing they go for the latter's qualifications. **Pick:** Jimmy Jackson — SF/SG (6'6") Ohio State.

5) Denver Nuggets (24-58) Needs: everything except shooting guards, with a point guard and a big man at the top of the list. **Analysis:** Finding someone better than career reserve Winston Garland to run the show from the point should be their top priority, presuming they re-sign starting power forward Greg Anderson (If they don't they'll have two top priorities). After two years, it seems clear that Chris Jackson, the third overall pick in the 1990 draft, is never going to think like a point guard and he's simply too small to play the 2. Meanwhile, they could really use someone who can fill in behind both

center Dikembe Mutombo and Anderson, each of whom had excellent years. They may be forced to take 6'8" point guard Walt Williams, who some scouts see as a poor man's Magic Johnson, over the ultra-explosive and more highly rated Miner. That's my guess anyway. **Pick:** Walt Williams — PG (6'8") Maryland.

6) Washington Bullets (25-57) Needs: best big man. **Analysis:** Starting center Pervis Ellison and power forward Harvey Grant need help up front, especially now with the late season trade of Tom Hammonds to Charlotte for Rex Chapman. Seven footer Greg Foster is still a project after being taken in the second round two years ago, and Charles Jones, whose never been any more than role player, is not getting any better at 32. However, the word out of Washington is that one time scoring champ Bernard King, out all of last season with a recurrence of his knee problems, is resolved to retire. Arkansas swingman Todd Day would look nice stepping into King's shoes, but the feeling here is that Miner is too good to pass on if he's here even though the Bullets are loaded at shooting guard (Rex Chapman, A.J. English, LaBradford Smith, Ledell Eackles). **Pick:** Harold Miner — SG (6'5") USC.

7) Sacramento Kings (29-53) Needs: point guard, center, depth everywhere. **Analysis:** Shooting guard Mitch Richmond, small forward Lionel Simmons and power forward Waymon Tisdale are all set, but that's it. They'd like to get someone who'd allow either center Duane Causewell, a project, or Spud Webb, who belongs in a third guard catalyst role, to be moved to the bench. The best thing they could hope for picking here is that Walt Williams slips through, which could happen if Denver passes on him. If Williams is gone, don't be surprised to see the Kings trade this pick to meet one or both of their positional needs. If they keep it, chances are they'll take the best player available. **Pick — Todd Day — SG/SF (6'8") Arkansas.**

8) Milwaukee Bucks (31-51) Needs: athleticism in frontcourt. **Analysis:** A lot may depend on off-season moves, beginning with their success in signing last year's top draft pick Anthony Avent (15th overall), who played in Italy this year after he could not reach a deal with the Bucks. Even if they do get Avent, however, improving frontcourt athleticism should still be the top priority. Day, if he's still available, 6'10" scoring machine Don MacLean or low post demon Byron Houston would all make sense. **Pick:** Don MacLean — PF/SF (6'10") UCLA.

9) Philadelphia 76ers (35-47) Needs: center, forward depth, pure point guard. **Analysis:** With the distinct possibility that Charles Barkley will be traded, it's difficult to even guess what the 76ers' plans for this pick might be. Other than Barkley and guards Hersey Hawkins and Johnny Dawkins, there doesn't seem to be anyone here you could even come close to calling irreplaceable, although Dawkins seems better suited to a third guard role than starting point guard. At this time, a quality big man who can score seems to be the most pressing need. Power forwards

Houston, Tom Gugliotta and Adam Keefe would all be solid picks at 9, but Philly could really stretch and go for UNLV center Elmore Spencer (rated as a mid to late first rounder by most scouts). It would also not be totally surprising to see them trade down with this pick to take Spencer in a more reasonable spot. **Pick:** Byron Houston — PF (6'7") Oklahoma State.

10) Atlanta Hawks (38-44) Needs: pure point guard, big man depth. **Analysis:** Rumeal Robinson is a player, but it doesn't look like he'll ever be a true point guard. However, he's better at that position than anyone they'll get here. Unless Walt Williams somehow slips through, I expect the Hawks will take the best big man left to help Kevin Willis down low, or possibly even to let him move to center full-time. **Pick:** Tom Gugliotta — PF (6'9") N.C. State.

11) Houston Rockets (42-40) Needs: overall depth. **Analysis:** Obviously, reports that Hakeem Olajuwon will be going to the highest bidder makes any prediction regarding the direction of the Rockets a very tough call, and, unfortunately, the question marks don't stop there. In fact, the only player management is really happy with is Otis Thorpe. Depending on whatever they determine their positional needs to be, they might go for low post assassin Adam Keefe, scoring wiz Malik Sealy, bomber extraordinaire Tracy Murray or the versatile and athletic Anthony Peeler. Obviously, at this time, I have no choice but to go the B.P.A. route again here. **Pick:** Anthony Peeler — SG (6'5") Missouri.

Other Lottery possibilities — (in the order I rate them) Adam Keefe — PF (6'9") Stanford, Malik Sealy — SF (6'8") St. John's, Tracy Murray — SF (6'8") UCLA, Clarence Weatherspoon — SF/PF (6'7") Mississippi State, LaPhonso Ellis — PF (6'9") Notre Dame, Bryant Stith — SG/SF (6'5") Virginia, Lee Mayberry — PG (6'2") Arkansas, Elmore Spencer — C (7'0") UNLV.

Best of the Rest — Tony Bennett — PG (6'0") Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Oliver Miller — PF (6'9") Arkansas, Sean Rooks — PF/C (6'10") Arizona, Doug Christie — SG/PG (6'6") Pepperdine, Robert Horry — SF/PF (6'9") Alabama, Popeye Jones — PF (6'8") Murray State, David Booth — SF (6'8") DePaul, Litterial Green — PG (6'1") Georgia, Hubert Davis — SG (6'4") North Carolina, Matt Geiger — C (7'0") Georgia Tech. ●

1992 First Round Selection Order

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Orlando | 15. L.A. Lakers |
| 2. Charlotte | 16. L.A. Clippers |
| 3. Minnesota | 17. Seattle |
| 4. Dallas | 18. San Antonio |
| 5. Denver | 19. Detroit |
| 6. Washington | 20. New York |
| 7. Sacramento | 21. Boston |
| 8. Milwaukee | 22. Phoenix |
| 9. Philadelphia | 23. Utah |
| 10. Atlanta | 24. Golden State |
| 11. Houston | 25. L.A. Clippers (from Cleveland) |
| 12. Miami | 26. Portland |
| 13. Denver (from New Jersey) | 27. Chicago |
| 14. Indiana | |

His Legend Is Growing

Reggie Lewis Is Becoming a Legitimate Superstar

By Jim Bianchine

It seems out of every cloud there is a silver lining. However trite, in the case of rising starlet Reggie Lewis, it's true.

It seems a twist of irony, if not fate that Lewis has, over the years, twice benefitted from the prolonged absence of Celtics' captain Larry Bird.

Lewis first began coming into his own as a player and showed signs he would bloom into a lethal scorer a few years back when Bird missed all but six games of the season due to surgery on both feet.

This season, in the absence of key players falling one after another, Bird included, Lewis took his game, already meteorically rising, to yet another level.

The sign that he has in fact arrived wasn't so much his first NBA All-Star appearance as it was the way he was given respect by his teammates throughout the year, most noticeably in the playoffs.

When a trio of sure-fire Hall of Famers looked to get him the ball in crunch-time situations and cleared one side of the court so he could work his one-on-one magic, it is a sure sign he has in fact inherited the Celtics' prestigious "go-to-guy" role.

Celtics coach Chris Ford was blunt about the passing of the torch to the lethal Lewis.

"Reggie is a complete player. He's reached the next level. He's our go to guy and has been all season," said Ford, adding, "he gets the job done on defense."

Now that's something Lewis has had to work hard on because it didn't come as naturally as his free-flowing offense.

Lewis is only the second Boston Celtic to ever lead the team in scoring, blocks and steals in a season.

Maybe the highest praise of all came from teammate Kevin McHale. "Reggie's becoming like Larry. When he gets the ball, you get out of his way," he said.

His metamorphosis from a little-used rookie to a legitimate superstar comes as a surprise to some.

When he first arrived some questioned the caliber of play and the strength of the Northeastern schedule.

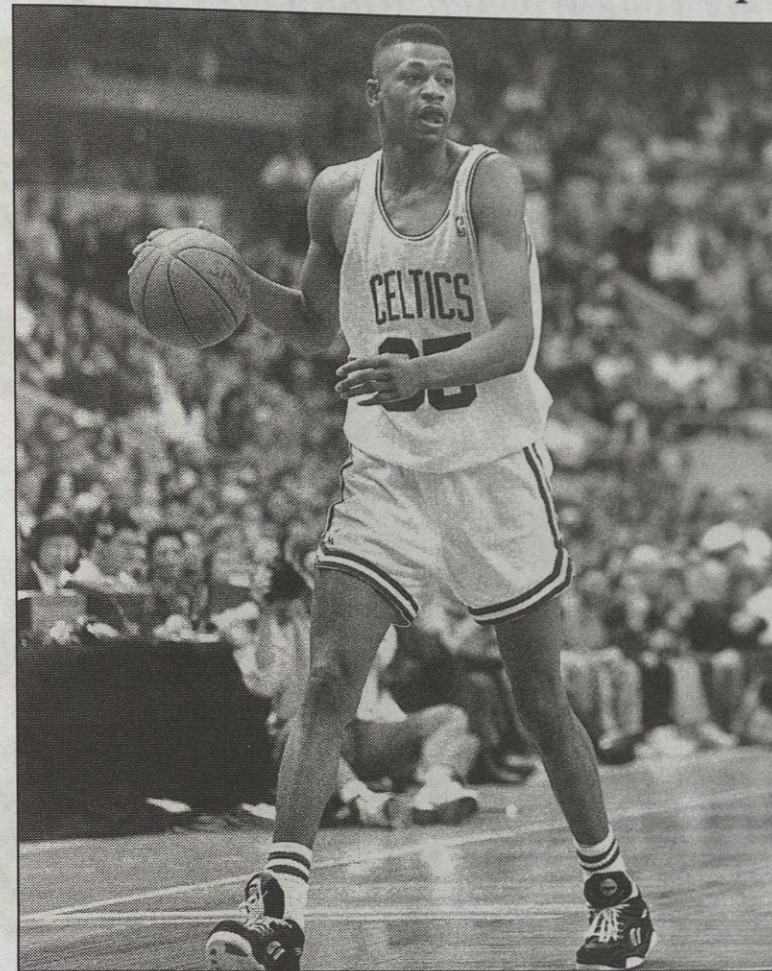
Others wondered if he really had the outside shot to make it in the pros as a slender, 6-7 forward. If not, how could he possibly be effective up front? Some thought he lacked the ball handling skills to be a big guard.

Even the Celtics couldn't have dreamed he'd turn out like he has.

Lewis was broken in gradually in the very best of situations, surrounded by veteran stars, some of whom were already legends. He could be free of pressure, something he now thrives on.

Unlike top draft choices in other parts, expected to carry their team from day one, Lewis had time to gradually sharpen his skills and learn his trade from some of the best in the game.

After all, he was used to playing second-fiddle from high school, where at powerful Dunbar in Baltimore he stood in the shadows of three players



Reggie: "I really do love it. I love those nights when I'm called upon to score points."

that are currently in the NBA — Reggie Williams, Muggsy Bogues and David Wingate.

Ironically, none of them have made nearly the impact as the kid who toiled quietly as their understudy.

Lewis, left alone to grow, just seemed to get better every year and the way he's going, he's headed for a stratosphere few will ever reach.

"He's almost a Michael Jordan-type player. Offensively he occupies an awful lot of people. And he not only hits jump shots, he's also getting to the basket and that's what's making him really tough," said Cleveland's Brad Daugherty, himself a player headed for the outer limits of the NBA.

Lewis may never be the type of leader Bird or McHale have been. He's simply not demonstrative. But his game has started taking on the same type of respect among his foes and teammates without him having to wave any pom-poms or lead any cheers.

Like in Bird's hey-day, the offense now pretty much revolves around the sleek Lewis.

It certainly did in the playoffs. In 10 games Lewis averaged a torrid 27 points, including outbursts of 42 and 36 points against Cleveland.

That's exactly why he has become the first option on a team that has over the years been a collection of offensive options.

Lewis, whose all-around game has vastly improved in other areas, has a

certain coolness without being cocky. He knows what he is capable of and, like many of the game's greats, looks for his shot at the most critical times.

In Game 3 of the Eastern Conference semifinals against the Cavs, Lewis lit up the scoreboard for 36 points and simply said, "I was getting the shots I wanted."

It didn't matter what guy they had on me, I felt I could turn and make the shot," he said. Spoken like a true scorer.

His slender build, quiet demeanor, explosive first step and deadly jumper is so reminiscent of one of the game's most lethal scorers of the past, George Gervin.

Like Gervin, the already used nickname "Ice Man" would definitely apply.

Like the former San Antonio scoring machine, Lewis sometimes becomes literally unstoppable, getting in a zone that seems to have a force field around it defenders can't penetrate, like in Game 3.

"Down the stretch I was definitely in it. It didn't matter if a guy was grabbing me, I was going to make the shot," he said.

The Cavs' Craig Ehlo had the dubious distinction of being the man burned most by Lewis.

"I knew he was going to shoot it (jump shot), but if he faked me, he'd have gone right by," said Ehlo who had trouble defending the drive and the jumper, as do most foes.

Lewis rose to the occasion and scored 13 final period points in Game 3.

But his best was yet to come. In Game 4 he found himself in an even higher "zone" busting loose for 42 points.

Certainly Lewis makes full use of a maze of picks set for him by willing mates, but much of what he accomplishes is through his own creativity and that's why he seems to be making the transition from All-Star to superstar and is securing his place in the Celtics' long green line of greats.

What seems to separate him from other very good players is his love for the ball in desperate situations.

"I really do love it. I love those nights when I'm called upon to score points," said Lewis, whose best work seems to come under the pressure of fourth quarters where prime-time players are truly born.

Though far different personalities, maybe a little of Bird's cat-burglar cool has rubbed off over the years.

Despite the heartbreaking Game 4 overtime loss on the parquet, the final seconds were very interesting.

Though the unstoppable McHale, trusty Robert Parish and Larry Legend were all on the court, Lewis was the number one option when the Celtics broke the huddle from a time out to set up their strategy.

Now quite used to double-teams, he spotted Bird cutting for the hoop, passed up the medium-range jumper and dished it off to his cutting teammate.

Though Bird's shot rolled off the rim, it showed Lewis has the instincts to find the open man, which makes him even more dangerous.

There was a time it appeared Lewis had one primary purpose — to score — and he was always looking for his shot.

That sole purpose has changed. He added a half-dozen assists to his 42-point outburst and seven to go with his 36-point game. In Game 2 he scored 26 points and took advantage of the constant double-teaming with five more assists.

Though he can't be contained by any one player when isolated with his slithering moves or staccato jumper, Lewis has in many ways become much more of a team player.

And during the Celtics torrid season-ending stretch and three game sweep of the Indiana Pacers in the first round of the playoffs, winning 18 out of 19 games in one stretch, it was Lewis who led the charge and ultimately charged up his teammates.

Even in the darkest hours, Lewis found a way to be the lone beacon in the night.

In the Celtics' Game 5, a 114-98 loss in Richfield to the Cavs, he found a way to light it up for 27 points while everyone else in green struggled.

The next game Lewis returned to the fray and did it again, leading the Celtics to a 110-107 comeback win, prompting Ford to say, "every time we went to Reggie down the stretch, he came through."

And he literally meant every time.

It's been a long time since his early days of cameo appearances to the one he enjoys today as the Celtics' leading man. ●

Will Bird Fly Again?

Only Time Will Tell What Larry Has Left

By Jim Bianchine

Well Larry, how about it, can we expect you back?

Larry Bird must have answered this question 200 times within the first hour after the Celtics 1992 off-season had officially begun. Sure, the inquiries came in a variety of forms, but all were put forth in the hope of unearthing some insight.

None of them succeeded.

"See you in September," was all the 35-year-old basketball legend would say.

In the papers and over the airwaves that night and the next morning, the disheartening Game 7 loss to the Cavaliers was pretty much overshadowed against the enormity of the question: Had Larry Bird played his final game?

"Just leave your phone numbers in a box," the star with the chronic back woes joked with the horde of media hounds who descended on him in the Celtics locker room just minutes after the Cavaliers had ushered them from the playoffs via a 122-104 drubbing that was not as close as the score might imply. "I'll let you know in September."

In fact, Larry was in a surprisingly jovial mood through most of the journalistic onslaught, especially considering the circumstances. No doubt, an attempt to avoid getting pinned down.

One resourceful scribe thought he might trick Bird into spilling something juicy by asking him for his thoughts on a hand painted sign reading "Larry's Last Game: Next Right" that some unknown Cavaliers loyalist had placed against a street sign just two turns away from the Richfield Coliseum.

Nice try.

"I didn't know Larry Nance was retiring," said Bird with a grin, referring to Cleveland's talented veteran forward. "I'll have to go over there and congratulate him on a great career."

That drew a round of chuckles, but slowed the throng for no more than a few seconds.

Larry turned serious when asked how he thought the disappointing loss might factor into his eventual decision, if at all.

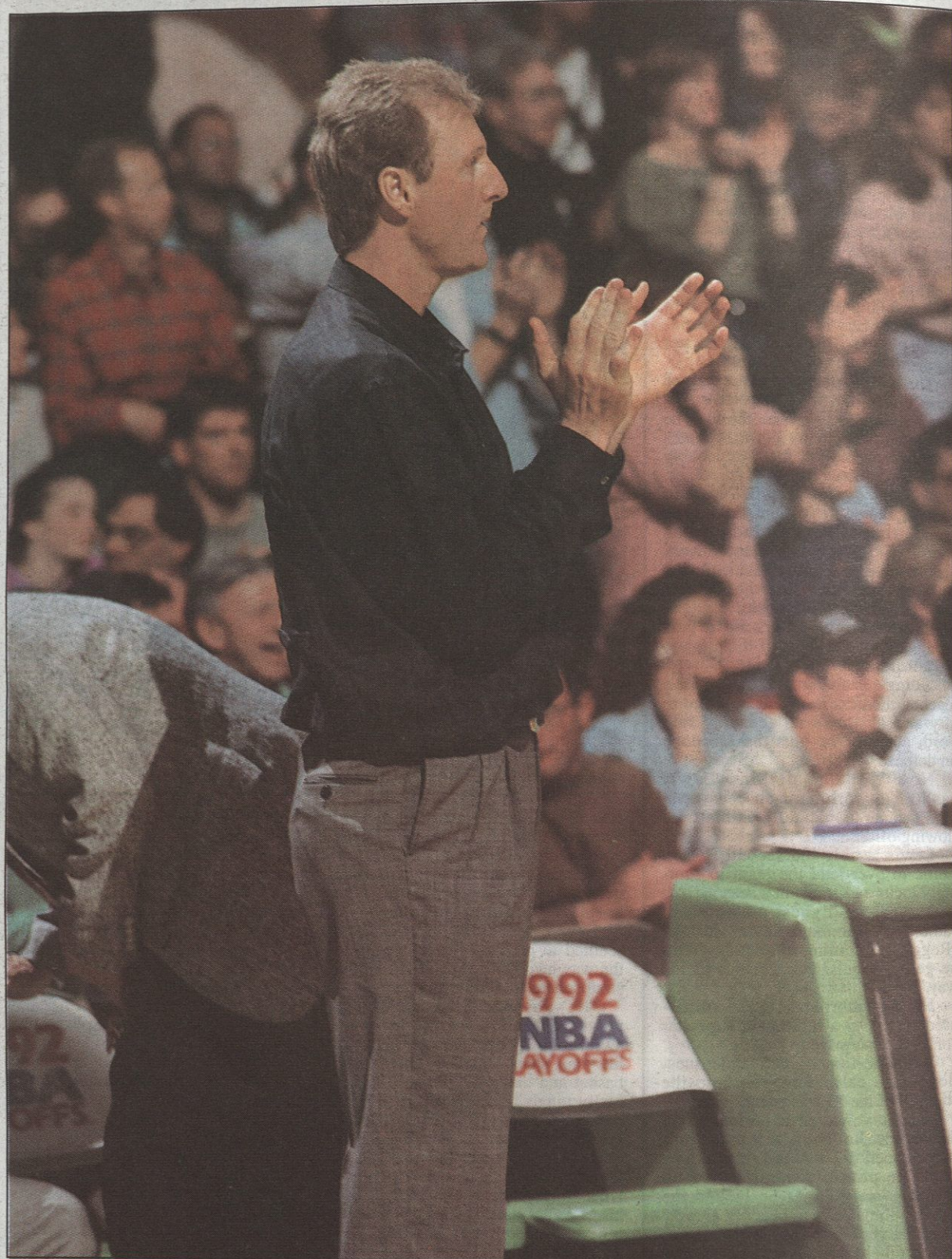
"You always get down when you lose," he confessed. "But I don't know the answer...I'll just have to wait and see how the back feels."

"I'll just wait until September," he repeated for about the twelfth time. Gradually, his audience began to filter away.

At this moment in time, most of the signs regarding Larry's future are encouraging.

He is still planning on playing for the Olympic team in Barcelona this summer. He claims his oft troubled back, which has forced him to miss 66 regular and post-season games the last two years, is free of pain. And, by all accounts, if the Celtics opened camp next week, he'd be ready to go.

Moreover, even though he missed nearly twice as many games this year (43) as last season (23), the team's medical people say his problems were not nearly as serious or painful as the



Larry: "I don't know the answer...I'll just have to wait and see how the back feels."

ones that forced him to undergo corrective surgery last June 7.

The problem, of course, is that there are no real assurances Larry's back won't flare up again, and he already went on record this winter to state that he never would have returned for the 1991-92 season had he thought his difficulties weren't going to be behind him. Based on this, one would think Bird might already have his mind made up not to

come back.

However, if you look at the entire text of recent Bird quotes, it would seem, if anything, he is leaning towards being here next season.

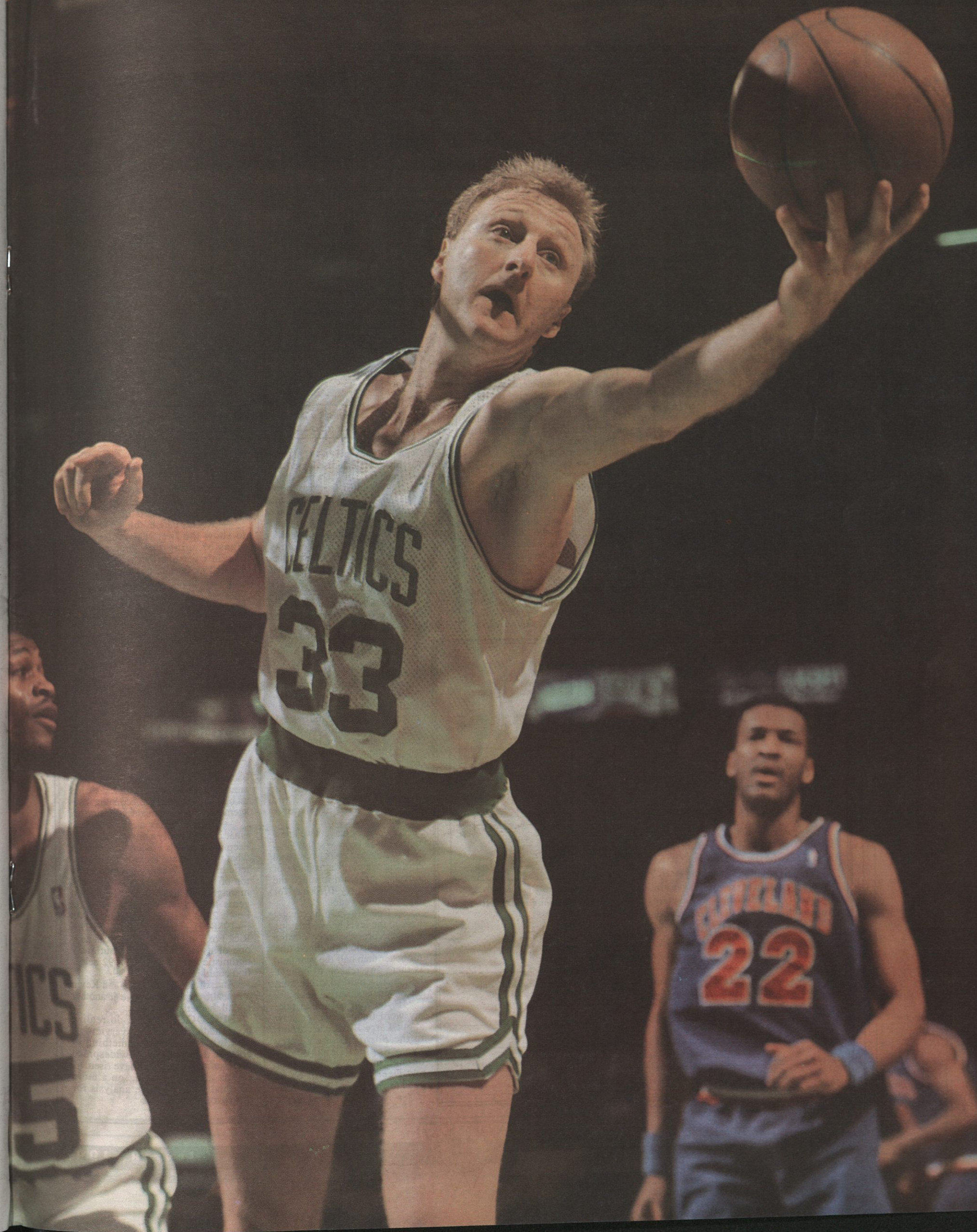
"If my back is okay, I can play as well as I want to play," Bird told a handful of local reporters at practice two days prior to Game 7. "I've got two more years on my contract. I'm taking it from there."

Of course, if in fact Larry does

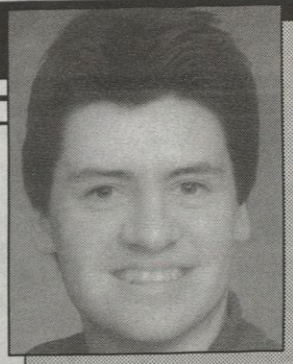
return, it will be with the knowledge that his back might not be his only concern. For starters, he already knows he will have to win back many of the fans who until recently had idolized him since before the first moment he ever set foot in Boston.

Quite possibly, as much as anything else, the 1991-92 season will be remembered as the year Boston

Continued on Page 19



Above and opposite page photographs by Steve Lipofsky



By Mike Spellman

Despite the disheartening conclusion to this Celtics season, the originally intended theme for this space will not change. I still want to say that this was my all-time favorite non-Championship Celtics team.

Readers should know first off, that my tenure as a Celtics diehard, like so many from this region of the country, extends back only as far as 1979. Yes, I freely admit it: I am one of the legion of minions who got totally caught up in Indiana State's legendary NCAA run with the knowledge that their leader would be joining the Celtics that Fall. (Fleeing Thought: How different do you think things would have been had the Celtics drafted Larry Bird after his senior season rather than before it?)

There are a lot of reasons I feel so strongly about the 1991-92 edition of Boston's basketball troupe, but what my ardor really boils down to is the utter improbability of this team's success. I mean, they were a heartbeat away from beating a much stronger, younger, healthier and better Cavaliers club and advancing to the Conference Finals for the first time since 1987.

Sure, speaking of the 1987 team, my previous favorite N-C team, you could say a lot of the same things about them that we've been saying about this team, and that gutsy overachieving bunch made it all the way to the NBA Finals, extending what many believe to

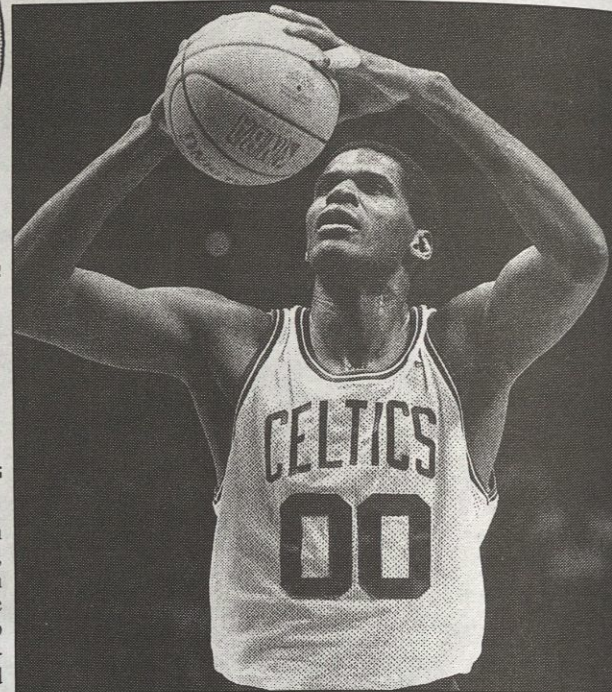
have been the best Lakers team of the Magic Era to six games. The way the 1986-87 team kept chugging along through injury after injury to "the big five" was beyond inspirational. The difference with that team, however, was that those five guys who carried virtually the entire load that year (remember, Bill Walton and Scott Wedman, the invaluable 6th and 7th men from the 1986 team, were out hurt practically the whole season) were each great players who made up the core of a championship team two of the three previous years. In lack of a fuller explanation, let it suffice to say that this team had been winning so long they'd forgotten how to lose.

On the other hand, the guys who carried the Celtics over this just ended season learned what it meant, as well as took, to be a winning team on the run — and we were fortunate enough to witness the evolution.

I know, I know...as great as we all certainly agree this season was, by now, especially with what just happened, we're all pretty tired of hearing and reading about all the games missed by originally thought indispensable Kevin McHale, Dee Brown and Bird, and about what an incredible job Eddie Pinckney, John Bagley, Rick Fox and Joe Kleine did filling the void, and about how Reggie Lewis went from a very good player to an All-Star caliber performer to a legitimate super-

NOTHING BUT NET

THIS TEAM WAS FUN TO WATCH



Robert Parish may have finally shown signs of aging, but he is still one of the top 6 or 7 centers in the league.

star over the span of a few months, and how Kevin Gamble made the commitment to become a "complete player", and how the 38-year old Robert Parish could still play with the league's best centers on any given night, and how Kevin McHale rediscovered his low post dominance of years past down the stretch after a lost first two-thirds of the season, and the 15 of 16, and coming from five back in the final three weeks, and the sweep of the Pacers, and Larry in game 6, et cetera, et cetera... But come on, it's been a blinding array of unexpected thrills and pleasant surprises, and it just doesn't seem right that so many people have already lost sight of this primarily because of the one game that brought it to a screeching halt.

Had Boston won the Game 4 heart-breaker, as they should have (Right, Lee Jones?), Game 7 never would have been played, the Celtics would be battling the Bulls in the Conference Finals right now, and most people around these parts would be feeling a whole lot better about things. And, just about regardless of what would have happened in that series, most of us would have been reasonably content over the Summer, too.

Well, I contend that all Celtics fans should be feeling pretty good right now, and looking forward to whatever the future holds.

The core of players we know will be back is quite solid:

— Reggie Lewis has arrived in a big way and is capable of carrying this team in much the same way Larry Bird has for the last dozen years.

— Dee Brown, if he can get back to the level he was playing at in the pre-season before the knee injury that sidelined him for better than half the year (and is there any reason to believe he can't), could also blossom into a superstar very quickly.

If you don't want to take my word for it, however, how about Larry Bird's, according to the *Boston Globe's* Larry Tye: "Reggie (Lewis) came through in a big way all year and Dee (Brown) will be as good as Reggie or better."

— Kevin Gamble is now a

total contributor.

— Rick Fox has the potential to become to the Celtics what Dan Majerle is to the Suns (don't laugh, a lot of prominent people around the league have also noted this).

— Robert Parish, though he began to show the first real indisputable signs of aging this year when he couldn't get up for the "really big games" as he has traditionally been able (see Game 7), is still among the top 6 or 7 centers in the league, and I haven't met anyone yet whose willing to bet me he won't be right up in that class again next year.

— Ed Pinckney, whose option for next year was very quietly picked up by the Celtics earlier this Spring, is going to continue to provide the type of defense, rebounding and hustle any serious team must have.

Moreover, bear in mind that:

— Either or both John Bagley and Sherman Douglas, each of whom would be an outstanding backup to Brown at the point, will be back.

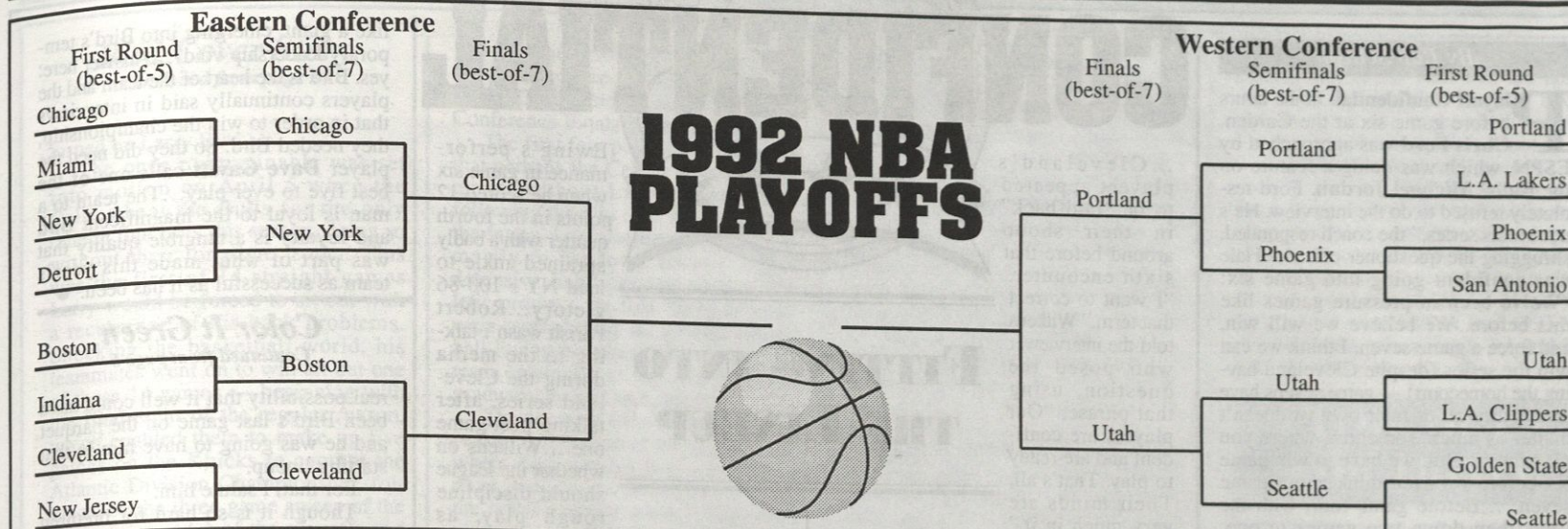
— Joe Kleine, a prototype NBA backup center and a swell guy to have around, will most likely be back. He has an option year left in his contract management has not yet made a decision on.

— The team has the 21st pick in what is universally considered a very deep draft, and is loaded with exactly what the Celts are looking for — athletic big men. When you consider on top of this the success the scouts and management have had picking out gems late in recent drafts (Reggie Lewis 22nd in 1987, Brian Shaw 24th in 1988, Dee Brown 19th in 1990, Rick Fox 24th in 1991), how can anyone of us not be at least cautiously optimistic over what the 1992 selection could provide.

And, of course, if Larry and Kevin are healthy enough to give it another go, all the better.

EPILOGUE: Yes, I do realize how shaded the above overview is. Just felt I should do something to combat the shockingly widespread forces of negativity that have risen.

I'm already working on a more thorough and objective analysis for this space next issue. ●



BOSTON CELTICS TEAM STATISTICS

BOSTON CELTICS TEAM STATISTICS																FINAL PLAYOFF STATS					
PLAYER	G	MIN	FG	FGA	FG%	FT	FTA	FT%	3FG	3FGA	ORB	REB	AST	STL	TO	BLK	PF	PTS	PPG		
Lewis	10	408	115	218	.528	48	63	.762	2	6	11	45	39	24	16	8	38	280	28.0		
McHale	10	305	65	126	.516	35	44	.795	0	1	21	66	22	5	9	5	34	165	16.5		
Gamble	10	335	62	133	.466	12	15	.800	0	2	13	45	23	12	10	6	26	136	13.6		
Parish	10	335	50	101	.495	20	28	.714	0	0	38	97	14	7	9	15	21	120	12.0		
Bird	4	87	21	40	.525	3	4	.750	0	5	2	18	21	1	6	2	7	45	11.3		
Bagley	10	308	42	93	.452	26	37	.702	1	4	8	27	85	9	35	1	17	111	11.1		
Pinckney	10	314	35	58	.603	26	31	.838	0	1	36	86	7	12	13	9	30	96	9.6		
Brown	6	120	22	40	.550	4	6	.667	0	3	3	12	31	1	7	4	17	48	8.0		
Fox	8	67	11	23	.478	4	4	1.000	3	6	3	6	4	2	2	2	11	29	3.6		
Douglas	6	65	9	25	.360	1	2	.500	0	2	1	4	10	0	4	0	8	19	3.2		
Kleine	9	82	9	22	.409	2	2	1.000	0	1	6	22	1	0	2	1	11	20	2.2		
Vrankovic	1	3	1	1	1.000	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2.0		

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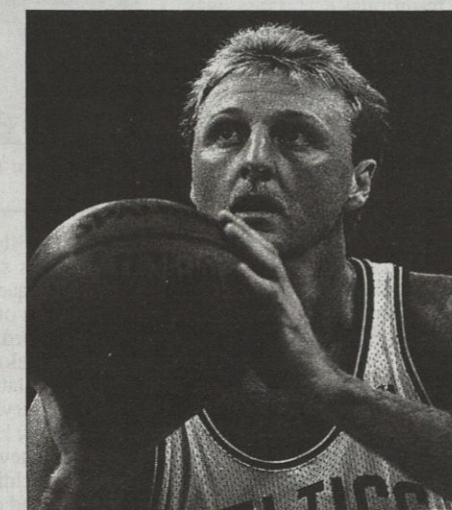
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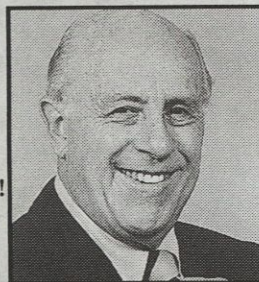
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By Bob Schron

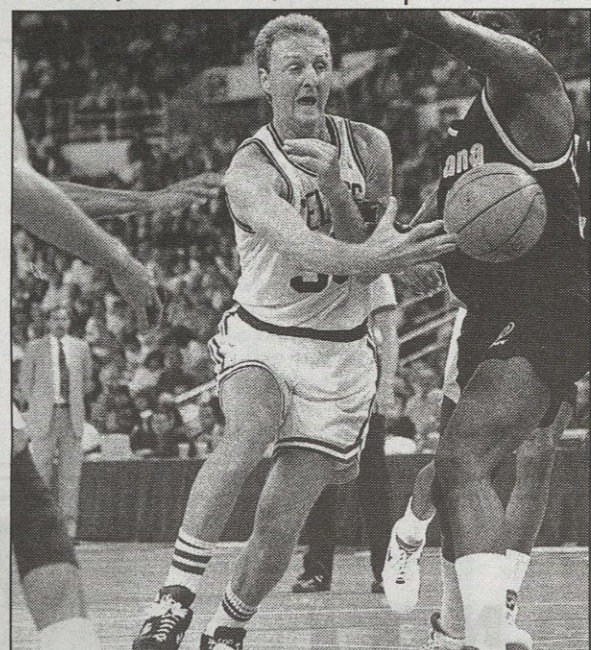
Playoff Confidential. In the hours before game six at the Garden, **Chris Ford** was approached by ESPN, which was doing a feature on the Bulls' **Michael Jordan**. Ford resolutely refused to do the interview. He's not in this series," the coach responded, shrugging the questioner off. ...McHale was confident going into game six: "We've been in pressure games like this before. We believe we will win, and force a game seven. I think we can win the series (despite Cleveland having the homecourt) — game seven has an identity all of their own (it doesn't matter as much, somehow, where you play them). But, we have to win game six before we even think about game seven." ...Before game four, with the Cavs then down two games to one, **Craig Ehlo** continued to insist, "we're the better team — the difference is slight, and I think the team that is able to make themselves more confident about winning will win the series." According to Ehlo: "Other than 'MJ' (Michael Jordan), Reggie Lewis is the best two guard in the league." ...**Bob Ryan** on what that addition of Bird meant this late in the C's playoff season: "I think it was tough for Larry to come back as late as he did in the playoffs. He obviously needed a game to get his feet wet. But what the Celtics needed from him as much as anything was his strength as a big body. In other words, Chris needed him as much for his emotion as for his role in what the Celtics were trying to do. Especially against the Cavaliers, who have a tremendous frontline." ...**Wayne Embry**, the former Celtic player and now Cavs' GM, headed up to Springfield for the Hall of Fame ceremonies after game four. ...Also there: **K.C. Jones**, K.C., with traditional K.C. class, was there to honor the induction of his college coach, **Phil Woolpert** of the University of San Francisco dynasty, 1955-56 (**Bill Russell**, of course, was the key player on that team). Jones felt that, going into the Cleveland series, the Celtics were a strong possibility for reaching the finals. Why? "Because of the way Reggie Lewis has stepped up his game," Jones said. **Dave Gavitt** addressed the "How do you fit Bird and **Dee Brown** back into the lineup" dilemma perfectly. "Every-one focuses in on how we're going to get Larry and Dee (who was brilliant in game three) back. But they forget that we're playing an excellent Cleveland Cavalier basketball team. They were favored to beat us. The Cavs are our headache, right now." ...Between games five and six, none of the Celtic players made themselves available for post-practice interviews. ...Angry? "You bet we were angry," replied Lewis. "We were embarrassed in game five. I don't think anybody wanted to talk about that game at all." ...Celtic players and coaches dismissed the problems of chemistry concerning Bird and Brown: "It doesn't matter who's on the floor," said Brown. "Whoever is out there has to play defense. If we're taking care of business defensively, we'll be doing it in such a way that helping out will come naturally." **Lenny Wilkens** on the importance of winning game six in Boston and avoiding a game seven confrontation: "We don't even think in those terms. We're just focusing on executing our offense, defense and rebounding. Very elemental stuff. Game six presents enough problems as it is."

CONFIDENTIAL



FITTING INTO THE LINEUP

...Cleveland's players appeared to be "laid back" in their shoot-around before that sixth encounter. "I want to correct that term," Wilkens told the interviewer who posed the question, using that phrase. "Our players are confident and are ready to play. That's all. Their minds are very much in it." Bird on the possibility that every game he plays conceivably could be his last: "I'm not thinking of it in that way. I have two years left on my contract,



Bird: "I don't think either Chris or myself knew what to expect."

and then we'll go from there."

Bird was surprised he was on the bench so frequently during the final stirring minutes of the OT defeat in game four, as Ford alternated Bird with **Eddie Pinckney** on the offensive/defensive platoon: "I was surprised, but not angry. With my back being the way it is, I don't think either Chris or myself knew what to expect."

Jerry Sichting on the main thrust of the Cleveland offense: "The Cavaliers work best when they patiently run their offense, and work the ball in to **Brad Daugherty** from **Mark Price**. I think they feel that if Daugherty is working hard down low against **Robert Parish**, they're in better shape to take care of the boards." ...Sighting on the seven-game series between New York and Chicago: "I think New York showed that if a team would work the Bulls hard down low, Chicago could be neutralized. You have to 'beat up' on the Bulls, slow them down...The question for New York in that series was could they generate enough offense? The one who had the most pressure on him in that series was **Patrick Ewing**, more so than even Jordan. Again, because of the offense, Patrick has to carry so much of the load for the Knicks. Sichting's words were verified by

Ewing's performance in game six when he scored 12 points in the fourth quarter with a badly sprained ankle to lead NY's 100-86 victory...Robert Parish wasn't talking to the media during the Cleveland series, after talking post-game one....Wilkens on whether the league should discipline rough play, as evidenced in the NY-Bulls' series: "I should throw the question back to you. If a player such as **Scottie Pippen**, who's had back surgery, is just thrown to the floor, do you think it's flagrant? I think there's responsibility somewhere."

Season Finale. The Celtics and Chris Ford were very intent on sustaining their intensity heading into game seven against Cleveland. "I'm proud of what we did in game 6," Ford said after the team's heartening 122-91 blitz of Cleveland. "But it's only one of two wins we have to get to win the series. We aren't celebrating, yet." ...Yet, there was a feeling of jubilation, of vindication perhaps, that Larry Bird had answered the doubts of many of us that he would be able to summon his great game ever again...

Bird's first quarter performance in game six was spine tingling; he had seven assists in the quarter (14 for the game) and each was spectacular, evoking cheers from the Garden that were deafening. The C's needed to build on that boost for game seven, but were unable to. "Experience is important, but you do have to execute," offered **Quinn Buckner**, and in game seven, the younger Cavaliers were the group that executed. "The (Cavs) are as smart as the Celtics," wrote Bob Ryan, "and younger." ...One recalled with resignation a statement made by **Red Auerbach** eleven years ago, at a C's practice; Red was discussing the play of **Randy Smith**, a great, blurringly fast (and durable) guard for years with Buffalo, and then finishing his career with the Knicks...Red was an admirer of Randy and said that. But then he turned serious. "The one thing about veteran players, though, guys who are getting older, is that you can't be sure about them. One night they'll play great, but on another, they just won't have it. And it doesn't matter what the circumstances are. It's what aging does to you." ...Face it: there will be the nagging query this long summer: should Bird have returned when he did, the C's up 2-1 in the last series, **Reggie Lewis** playing

like a giant, emerging into Bird's temporary leadership void?...Answer here: yes. Bird is the heart of the team and the players continually said in interviews that in order to win the championship, they needed Bird. So they did need the player **Dave Gavitt** calls one of the best five to ever play...The team to a man is loyal to the magnificent Bird and loyalty is a tangible quality that was part of what made this year's team as successful as it has been. ●

Color It Green

Continued from page 6

real possibility that it well could have been Bird's last game on the parquet and he was going to have him in that starting lineup.

For that, I salute him. Though it is so hard for brethren bathed in green to focus clearly on things, especially following a rather humiliating Game 7 loss, you have to be realistic.

Credit must be given to the Cavs for regrouping after being pasted on the parquet in Game 6 by 31 points.

Even more so, credit coach **Lenny Wilkens**, who in the chess game with a worthy opponent in Ford, made plenty of counter moves throughout the series.

As the spring subtly turns into summer, don't let the sour taste of the last game distort things. Don't let your vision be blurred and block out the Celtics accomplishments.

They gave you plenty — thrills, spills and chills — and when you think about it, the future looks far better than when they went their separate ways for summer vacation just two short years ago.



At last look the homecourt advantage was still very prevalent throughout the playoffs. The home team stood 42-13...The changing of the guard should be interesting in Phoenix next season. I for one will certainly miss coach **Cotton Fitzsimmons**...The Nuggets are about to make former star **Dan Issel** their head coach. Interesting move. Issel took good talent, mixed it with heart and made himself a great player. Maybe he is just the guy they have been looking for. Paul Westhead certainly wasn't...Since I have escaped the leg irons and the guys with the white coats have yet to find me, I remain a bit surprised at how easily the Jazz handled my crow-prediction of Seattle. After all I thought I was in good shape since I knew the Sonics accounted for two of Utah's four home losses at the Delta Center. Maybe there's a reason I never win at the dog track...The Knicks did exactly what they had to against defending NBA champion Chicago. They played as physical as they could and as a result gave the Bulls all they wanted.

Three years ago it was the belief of yours truly that Portland was slightly better than the rest. Gong!

Last season I thought they were definitely better than Chicago. Gong! Three gongs and I'm out. I can't see anyone beating them this time.

Hopefully you will have a great summer and if I'm wrong again, you will have forgotten.

If the Blazers don't come through this time, they never will. ●

Bird Cover Story

Continued from page 14

turned on Larry Bird.

The once unimaginable was set into motion on April 5 when the Celtics beat the Bulls for the only time in four tries this season, doing so without their longtime leader. This was the first of 14 straight games Larry would be forced to sit out with a recurrence of his back problems. Shocking the basketball world, his teammates went on to win all but one of those 14 games — beginning with the final eight of the regular season, which enabled them to make up five games on the Knicks to capture the Atlantic Division Championship, followed by the three game sweep of the Pacers in round 1 of the playoffs and then two of the opening three against the Cavs.

When Larry returned for Game 4 at the Garden, the Celtics had a golden opportunity to go up 3-1 in the best-of-seven series. Instead, they lost a

104-102 heartbreaker in overtime, followed by two of the next three to allow Cleveland to advance to the Conference Finals against Chicago.

The first few publicized assertions that perhaps the Celtics would be better off without Larry Legend came following the win over the Bulls, with the intrepid opinionaters pointing primarily to his long acknowledged defensive liabilities and waning athletic prowess. At first, these thoughts were scoffed at by the general basketball-loving populace. However, as the team continued to win, the argument gradually picked up support.

The negative feelings towards Bird peaked in the wake of the Game 4 loss, where Bird saw his first action in 38 days and played poorly. Following the series evening setback, Cleveland players, several area columnists and, it seemed, a healthy majority of local sports talk show callers were saying openly the team would be better off if Bird was not around.

Larry managed to temporarily turn the tide with his heroic 16 point, 14

assist performance in Game 6 that led the way and enabled the Celtics to extend the series to the limit, as the long silent Bird lovers came out in force. However, since the Game 7 debacle, despite the fact that Larry was one of the few Bostonians to turn in a half way respectable outing (12 points on 6-for-9 shooting, 5 rebounds and 4 assists in 33 minutes), there appears to have been another backslide in support to the point where the field of loyalists is split down the middle.

Not surprisingly, the Celtics players and management have rallied to say publicly that they hope Larry returns next season.

Larry says he believes the "real fans" are still behind himself and the team, and that that is what matters to him most, but as anyone can clearly see from the remarks below, the negative talk has hurt him nonetheless.

"The only fans I worry about are the ones who show up for our games," Bird told the *Boston Globe's* Celtics beat reporter Peter May. "The ones who never see us or never go to the

games, they're the ones that are talking. The reason I have a bad back now is to try and make them happy. I'm not sure if it's worth it or not."

Reportedly, Bird will earn \$3.75 million for the 1992-93 season just for having signed the two year contract extension earlier this season. However, none of the \$4.25 million he is slated to receive the following year is guaranteed. If he plays 40 games next year, half of that 1993-94 pay becomes guaranteed, 60 and he gets the whole amount. ●

TIME OUT FOR TRIVIA

The Celtics played well, but lost game 7 in Cleveland to the Cavaliers. How closely did you follow the series?

1. What was the single game highest point total for either team during the playoffs, and which team achieved it?
2. What was the lowest single game point total for the series?
3. Can you remember how many assists Larry Bird had in game 6?
4. Can you remember who led the Celtics in rebounding in game 6, with 8?
5. When the Celtics won game 2 in Cleveland to even the series, can you remember who led the Celtics in scoring, with 17 points?
6. Reggie Lewis stepped up his game all the way through the playoffs. Which game against the Cavaliers did he score his playoff career high in points, and how many did he score?
7. Who scored the most points in a single game for the Cavaliers in the series, and in which game?
8. Do you remember which Celtic fouled out of game 5, won by Cleveland?
9. Trailing 76-75 after 3 quarters in game 2, the Celtics scored the first 6 points of the fourth and never trailed again. Can you remember who scored four of those six points?
10. The Celtics only made four three-point shots during the series. Reggie Lewis made one. Who made the other three?
11. The Celtics won game three despite the Cavaliers shooting 57% from the field. They did it by dominating the boards. Can you remember how many offensive rebounds they had in game three, as well as their rebounding edge for the game?
12. In their game 7 domination of the Celtics, the Cavaliers gave a passing clinic. How many assists did they have for the game?
13. How many technical fouls were assessed during the series, and who was given them?
14. Which Cavalier scored a personal playoff high 20 points with 13 assists in game 5?
15. Which team scored the most total points for the series?

Answers: 1. Both the Celtics and Cavaliers reached 122 points once, the C's in game 6. 2. Larry Parish, 33. 3. 14. 4. Dee Brown. 5. 12. 6. 16. 7. 44. 8. 14. 9. 14. 10. 12. 11. Only one, an illegal defense foul. 12. 12. 13. 11. They had 21 offensive rebounds, and overall outrebounded them 45-33. 14. 42. 15. They had 22 offensive rebounds. 16. Dee Brown. 17. Eddie Pinckney. 18. Rick Fox. 19. Larry Nance scored 32 in game 4. 20. 42. 21. Larry Nance scored 32 in game 4. 22. 42. 23. 14. 24. 44. 25. 44. 26. 44. 27. 44. 28. 44. 29. 44. 30. 44. 31. 44. 32. 44. 33. 44. 34. 44. 35. 44. 36. 44. 37. 44. 38. 44. 39. 44. 40. 44. 41. 44. 42. 44. 43. 44. 44. 44. 45. 44. 46. 44. 47. 44. 48. 44. 49. 44. 50. 44. 51. 44. 52. 44. 53. 44. 54. 44. 55. 44. 56. 44. 57. 44. 58. 44. 59. 44. 60. 44. 61. 44. 62. 44. 63. 44. 64. 44. 65. 44. 66. 44. 67. 44. 68. 44. 69. 44. 70. 44. 71. 44. 72. 44. 73. 44. 74. 44. 75. 44. 76. 44. 77. 44. 78. 44. 79. 44. 80. 44. 81. 44. 82. 44. 83. 44. 84. 44. 85. 44. 86. 44. 87. 44. 88. 44. 89. 44. 90. 44. 91. 44. 92. 44. 93. 44. 94. 44. 95. 44. 96. 44. 97. 44. 98. 44. 99. 44. 100. 44. 101. 44. 102. 44. 103. 44. 104. 44. 105. 44. 106. 44. 107. 44. 108. 44. 109. 44. 110. 44. 111. 44. 112. 44. 113. 44. 114. 44. 115. 44. 116. 44. 117. 44. 118. 44. 119. 44. 120. 44. 121. 44. 122. 44. 123. 44. 124. 44. 125. 44. 126. 44. 127. 44. 128. 44. 129. 44. 130. 44. 131. 44. 132. 44. 133. 44. 134. 44. 135. 44. 136. 44. 137. 44. 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TOM HEINSOHN

AGE: 57

RESIDENCE: Worcester, MA

FAMILY: Tom has one daughter, Donna, and two sons, Paul and David.

OCCUPATION: Tom has just completed his 11th year as a teammate with Mike Gorman on SportsChannel, and his second as play-by-play man on WFXT-TV.

HOMETOWN/HIGH SCHOOL/ COLLEGE: My hometown is Union City, New Jersey. I went to St. Michael's in Union City, and attended college at Holy Cross.

NBA EXPERIENCE: "Heinie" played for the Celtics from 1956-1965. He was the NBA's Rookie of the Year in 1957, and represented the Celtics in six All-Star games. He

Be it as a player or coach, I would always like to be known as a competitor. — Tom Heinsohn

averaged 18.6 ppg in 654 regular season contests. Tom was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1985. Four years after retiring as a player, Tom became head coach of the Celtics (1969-70 to 1977-78). His coaching tenure was

YESTERDAY'S



TOM HEINSOHN'S COMPETITIVE SPIRIT NEVER QUIT

punctuated by success, as he led the 1974 and 1976 squads to World Championship titles, and won Atlantic Division titles for five consecutive years.

MOST MEMORABLE GAME: It is definitely winning our first championship in 1956-57. We won the championship in an exciting seventh game against St. Louis.

PROUDEST MOMENT AS A CELTIC: 1974 was probably my proudest, because it was my first championship as a head coach.

MOST DISAPPOINTING MOMENT AS A CELTIC: I would have to say it had to be the year we went 68-14 (1972-73), then Havlicek got hurt and we lost to the Knicks in the playoffs. It's disappointing because we were the best team in the league that year.

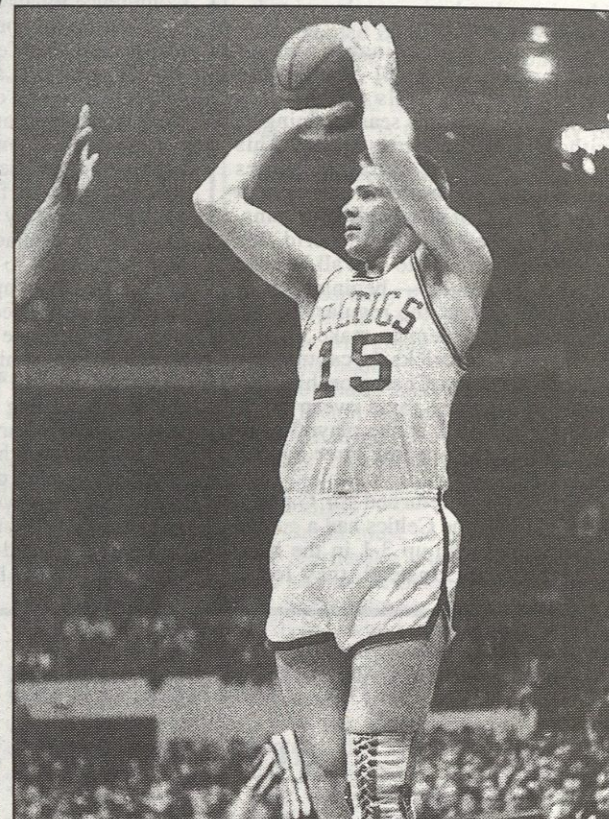
MOST UN-DERRATED PLAYER YOU PLAYED WITH AS A CELTIC: Tom Sanders. He was considered a defensive player, but he was very smart and a better-than average offensive player. Nobody ever really

thought of him in that vein.

BEST PLAYER YOU PLAYED AGAINST: There were two very exceptional players that I lined up against. They were Elgin Baylor and Bob Pettit.

HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED AS A CELTIC: Be it as a player or coach, I would always like to be known as a competitor.

THE BEST ADVICE YOU RECEIVED WHILE IN BASKETBALL AND FROM WHOM: There



Tom: "I always kept my ears open and gladly accepted advice from anyone."

really wasn't any one individual that I can recall. I listened to everybody. I always kept my ears open and gladly accepted advice from anyone. ●



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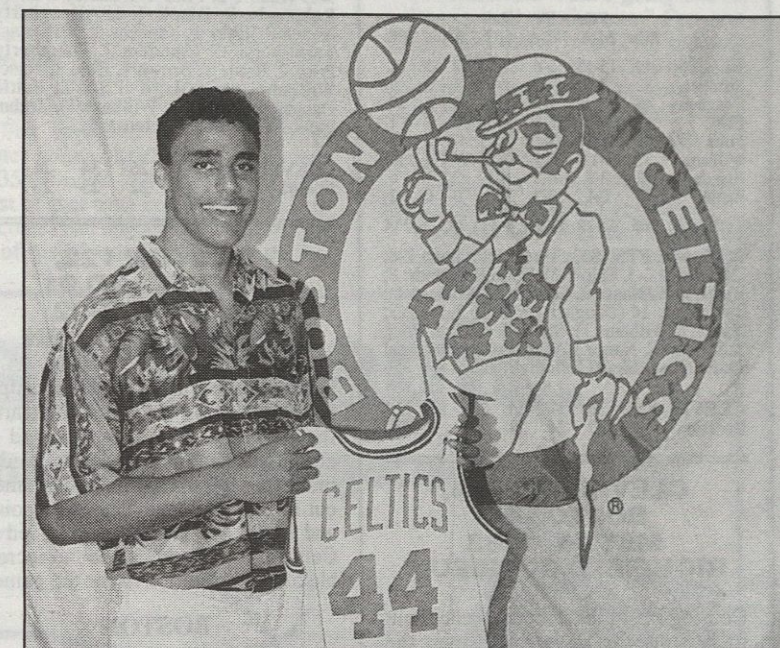
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**BOSTON 110,
CLEVELAND 107
MAY 8, 1992
BOSTON GARDEN**

The Celtics took a 2-1 lead in the series thanks to Reggie Lewis, who tied a career playoff high with 36 points. Kevin McHale added 22 points, on 10-of-15 shooting, off the bench. Dee Brown also gave the club a spark by scoring 10 points and dishing out six assists in 19 minutes. Mark Price paced the Cavs with 27 points and 10 assists.

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Gamble	32	5-9	0-0	1-1	1	3	10					
Pinckney	39	5-7	7-7	7-13	1	3	17					
Parish	39	2-11	7-10	9-17	5	2	11					
Bagley	28	1-13	0-0	1-3	6	1	2					
Lewis	45	17-32	2-3	0-1	7	2	36					
McHale	30	10-15	2-3	3-9	0	3	22					
Kleine	4	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	2					
Douglas	4	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
Brown	19	5-6	0-0	0-1	6	6	10					
TOTALS	240	46-97	18-23	21-45	26	20	110					

FG% .474; FT% .783; Three-point goals 0-2, .000 (Brown 0-1, Lewis 0-1); Team Rebounds: 10; Blocked: 6 (Lewis 2, Parish 2, Gamble 1, McHale 1); Turnovers: 7 (Bagley 2, Parish 2, Lewis 1, Pinckney 1); Steals: 4 (Lewis 2, Bagley 1, Pinckney 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: None.

CLEVELAND												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Nance	42	9-16	1-1	1-12	3	5	19					
Sanders	23	3-4	1-2	0-2	0	5	7					
Daugherty	45	10-17	2-4	1-11	1	2	22					
Ehlo	36	6-12	1-2	3-5	7	4	15					
Price	40	9-17	8-8	0-2	10	2	27					
Battle	14	2-5	2-2	0-0	2	0	6					
Williams	31	4-4	3-3	1-1	5	5	11					
Kerr	8	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
James	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
TOTALS	240	43-75	18-22	63-23	28	23	107					

FG% .573; FT% .818; Three-point goals 3-7, .429 (Ehlo 2-3, Price 1-4); Team Rebounds: 4; Blocked: 3 (Nance 2, Price 1); Turnovers: 11 (Ehlo 3, Williams 3, Daugherty 2, Battle 1, Nance 1, Price 1); Steals: 5 (Ehlo 1, Nance 1, Price 1, Sanders 1, Williams 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: None.

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Boston	22	26	35	24	31	110						
Cleveland	22	26	35	24	31	107						

**CLEVELAND 114,
BOSTON 112
MAY 10, 1992
BOSTON GARDEN**

Cleveland was in a must-win situation, and they did. The Cavs pulled out the OT victory behind the unbelievable shooting of Larry Nance. Nance was 13-of-16 from the floor for 32 points. The Cavs had built a 14-point lead by the beginning of the third quarter, but Reggie Lewis (42 points) and the rest of the team would fight back, limiting the Cavs to only 40 second half points. Larry Bird, making his first appearance in the playoffs, was not a factor, as he played only 17 minutes and scored just four points.

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Gamble	18	2-8	0-0	0-3	4	4	4					
Pinckney	42	5-7	0-0	2-9	2	3	10					
Parish	47	7-16	2-3	4-18	1	2	16					
Bagley	37	3-10	2-2	1-3	7	4	8					
Lewis	48	16-28	9-12	1-3	6	4	42					
McHale	35	8-15	7-9	4-5	1	4	23					
Brown	16	1-4	0-0	0-0	5	1	2					
Bird	17	1-5	2-2	0-2	3	1	4					
Fox	5	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	4	3					
TOTALS	265	44-92	22-28	12-43	27	27	112					

FG% .478; FT% .788; Three-point goals 2-4, .500 (Fox 1-1, Lewis 1-1, Bird 0-1, Pinckney 0-1); Team Rebounds: 9; Blocked: 7 (Parish 3, Pinckney 2, Bird 1, Lewis 1); Turnovers: 13 (Bagley 3, Gamble 3, Brown 2, Lewis 2, Bird 1, McHale 1, Parish 1); Steals: 8 (Lewis 5, Bagley 1, Gamble 1, McHale 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: None.

**GAME
BY
GAME**

**CELTICS FALL
IN GAME SEVEN**

CLEVELAND												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Nance	49	13-16	6-6	2-7	2	3	32					
Sanders	32	3-6	3-4	0-2	1	3	9					
Daugherty	43	9-15	2-2	1-8	1	5	20					
Ehlo	45	0-9	1-2	3-9	3	4	1					
Price	43	11-18	2-4	0-2	12	3	25					
Williams	37	4-11	10-12	2-7	4	6	18					
Brandon	12	3-3	0-0	0-1	2	1	6					
Battle	4	0-1	2-2	0-0	0	0	2					
TOTALS	265	43-79	26-32	8-38	25	25	114					

FG% .544; FT% .813; Three-point goals 2-8, .250 (Price 2-5, Ehlo 0-3); Team Rebounds: 8; Blocked: 5 (Nance 2, Sanders 2, Williams 1); Turnovers: 14 (Daugherty 5, Ehlo 3, Price 3, Nance 2, Williams 1); Steals: 8 (Ehlo 2, Price 2, Sanders 2, Nance 1, Williams 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: None.

CLEVELAND												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Cleveland	26	37	20	20	11	114						
Boston	27	24	29	23	9	112						

**CLEVELAND 114,
BOSTON 98
MAY 13, 1992
RICHFIELD COLISEUM**

Coming off of their much needed win in Boston, the Cavs rolled over the Celtics in their return to Cleveland for game 5. The Cavs' "Big 3" (Daugherty, Nance and Williams) dominated the Celts' "Big 3." The Cavs' "Big 3" outscored (64-19), outrebounded (18-16) and outblocked (8-0) Parish, Bird and McHale. Reggie Lewis tried to keep the Celtics in the game with 27 points, but it wasn't enough.

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Pinckney	22	0-3	2-2	0-1	0	3	2					
Gamble	31	7-12	4-4	1-5	4	4	18					
Parish	23	1-5	2-2	2-8	0	3	4					
Lewis	43	12-21	3-4	2-4	4	2	27					
Bagley	19	4-6	0-0	0-0	5	1	8					
Bird	20	6-10	1-1	1-5	0	13	13					
McHale	26	1-9	0-0	1-3	2	2	2					
Brown	29	6-13	0-0	0-1	4	6	12					
Kleine	22	6-10	0-0	5-11	0	2	12					
Fox	5	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0					
TOTALS	240	43-89	12-13	12-38	20	26	98					

FG% .483; FT% .923; Three-point goals 0-4, .000 (Bagley 0-1, Bird 0-1, Gamble 0-1, Lewis 0-1); Team Rebounds: 6; Blocked: 3 (Brown 1, Gamble 1, Lewis 1); Turnovers: 12 (Bagley 2, Bird 2, Brown 2, Pinckney 2, Fox 1, Gamble 1, Kleine 1, Lewis 1); Steals: 7 (Lewis 3, Pinckney 2, Fox 1, McHale 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: 1.

CLEVELAND												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Nance	38	7-15	4-5	0-6	1	4	18					
Sanders	27	3-9	0-0	3-5	3	4	6					
Daugherty	41	10-13	8-11	3-9	5	1	28					
Ehlo	38	8-9	2-2	0-6	13	4	20					
Price	33	5-13	2-2	0-2	6	0	13					
Williams	36	7-12	4-5	1-3	3	0	18					
Brandon	15	3-6	0-0	0-3	4	1	6					
Battle	8	2-2	1-1	1-1	0	0	5					
Ferry	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
James	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0					
TOTALS	240	45-81	21-26	8-35	35	14	114					

FG% .556; FT% .808; Three-point goals 3-7, .429 (Ehlo 2-2, Price 1-4, James 0-1); Team Rebounds: 9; Blocked: 10 (Daugherty 4, Nance 3, Ehlo 1, Sanders 1, Williams 1); Turnovers: 12 (Sanders 3, Daugherty 2, Price 2, Battle 1, Brown 1, Ehlo 1, Nance 1, Williams 1); Steals: 6 (Price 2, Battle 1, Daugherty 1, Ehlo 1, Williams 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: 1.

CLEVELAND												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Cleveland	30	26	34	24	114							
Boston	27	22	23	26	98							

**BOSTON 122,
CLEVELAND 91
MAY 15, 1992
BOSTON GARDEN**

Behind the inspirational leadership of Larry Bird, who made his first start of the playoffs, the Celtics staved off elimination in game 6. Bird played 37 minutes, scored 16 points and handed out 14 assists. Reggie Lewis (26 points) and Kevin McHale (22 points) led the Celtic attack. The C's shot an incredible 59% from the field for the game.

BOSTON												
	Min	FG	FT	Reb	A	F	Pts					
		M-A	M-A	O-T								
Bird	37	8-18	0-1	0-6	14	3	16					
Gamble	37	6-8	2-2	2-3	6	1	14					
Parish	25	5-9	2-2	1-5	1	2	12					
Bagley	25	3-4	0-0	0-1	8	1	6					
Lewis	35	9-17	8-8	3-6	1	3	26					
Pinckney	19	5-6	2-3	3-6	0	2	12					
Kleine	9	2-4	0-0	0-2	0	0	4					
McHale	23	9-12	4-6	1-6	0	4	22					
Brown	23	3-7	0-0	2-8	9	1	6					
Fox	4	1-2	0-0	0-1	1	0	2					
Vrankovic	3	1-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	2					
TOTALS	240	52-88	18-22	12-44	41	17	122					

FG% .591; FT% .818; Three-point goals 0-6, .000 (Bagley 0-1, Fox 0-1, Kleine 0-1, Bird 0-3); Team Rebounds: 5; Blocked: 6 (Lewis 3, Bird 1, Gamble 1, Pinckney 1); Turnovers: 9 (Bagley 3, Gamble 2, Bird 1, Brown 1, Fox 1, Lewis 1); Steals: 11 (Gamble 2, Lewis 2, Parish 2, Pinckney 2, Bagley 1, Bird 1, Brown 1); Technical fouls: None; Illegal Defense: None.

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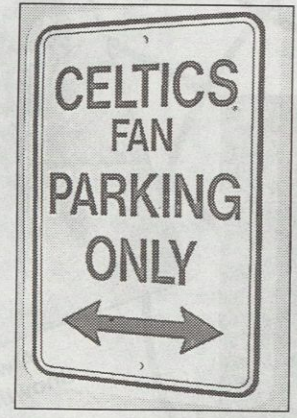
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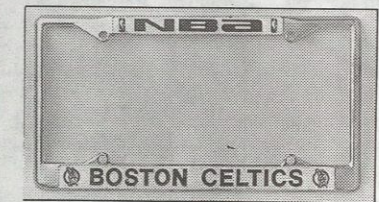
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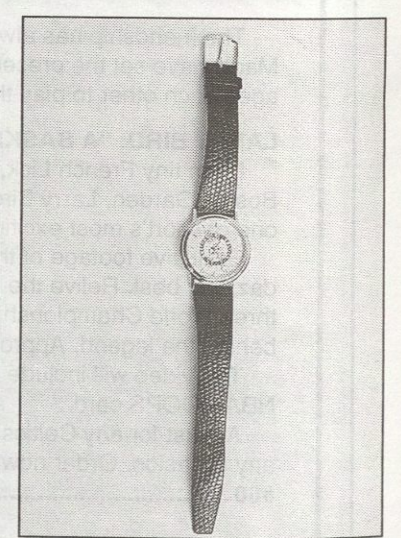
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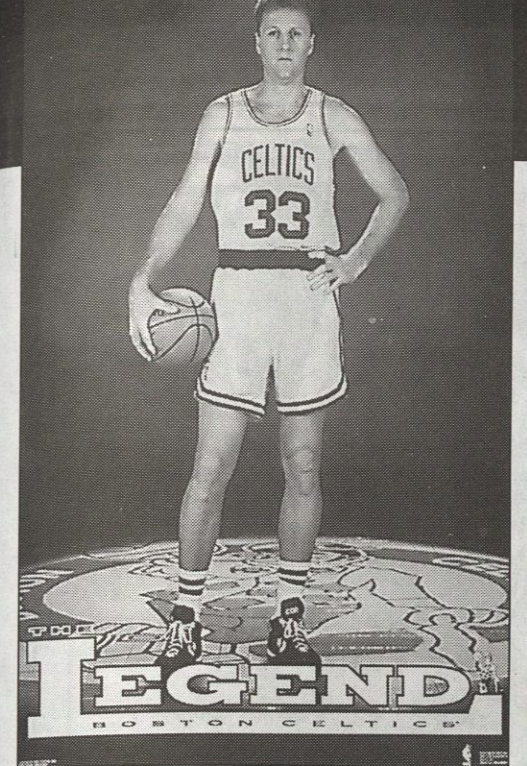


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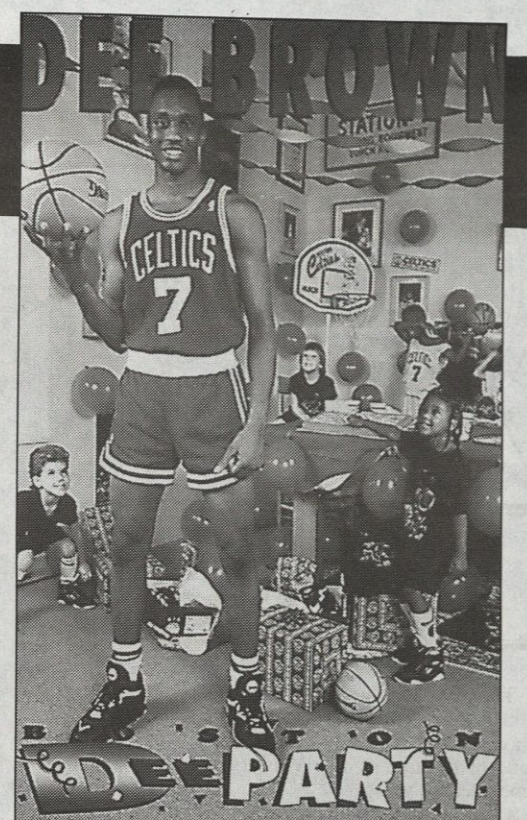


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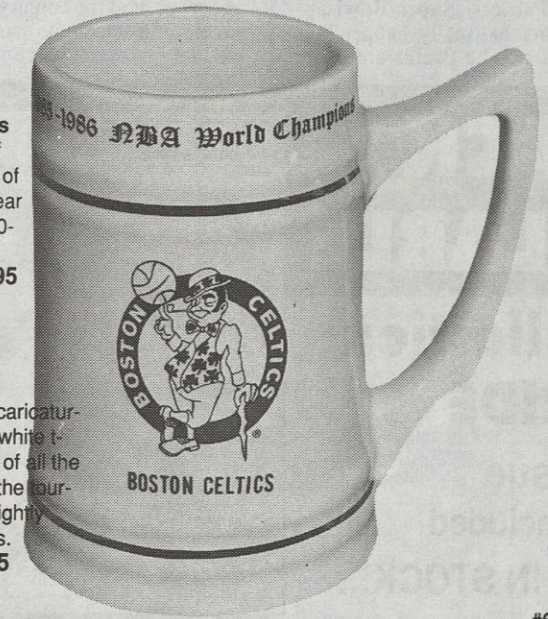
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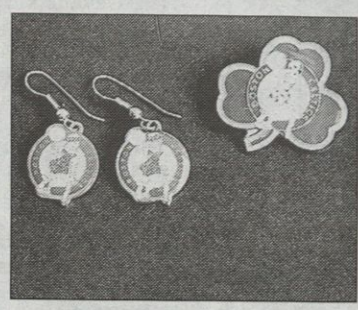
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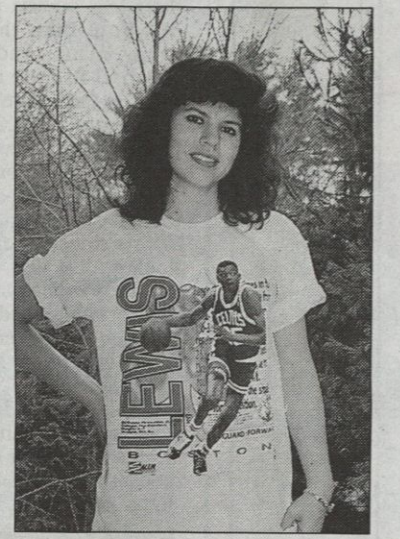


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New for this season. 100% cotton ash grey t-shirt screened in black, green and yellow for the bold look of today.
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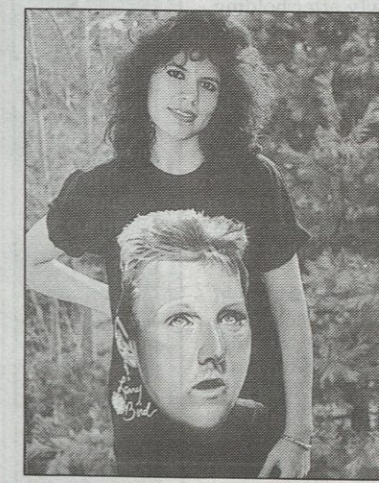
Telephone
Your official team Phone. Now you can be one up on anyone of your Celtics friends with this NEW green and white phone. Lighted big button keypad, desk/wall convertible, hearing aid compatible and 3-year warranty. A MUST FOR ANY CELTIC FANATIC!!
#6.....\$59.95



Face to Face - Dee Brown
Bold graphic is new for this season and Dee is featured on this 100% cotton black t-shirt.
#70.....\$16.95



Rick Fox T-Shirt
His very own 100% cotton black tee shirt. Showing you how he does it his way.
#76.....\$14.95



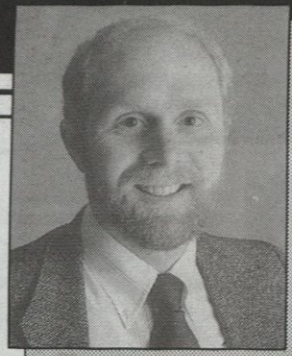
Face to Face
Bold graphic picture of Larry Bird on this black t-shirt of 100% cotton. New for the 1992 season.
#62.....\$16.95



Three Dimensional
100% ash grey cotton t-shirt with a 3 dimensional Bird. #33 and Bird in large block letters with a picture of Larry shooting in the center.
#73.....\$14.95



New Aerial Assault II
Designs in every direction - on the front, in back and on the side. These contemporary team graphics were especially designed for all Celtics fans.
#67.....\$18.95



By Glenn Rifkin

If you ever find yourself in Cleveland, you'll notice a gray, barren city surrounded on three sides by beautiful, well-tended suburbs with green lawns and large brick houses. To the north is Lake Erie which blows a cold, unforgiving wind off its waters throughout the winter and makes summertime night baseball games dreary affairs.

If you spend enough time there, you'll also notice a difference in the people. They stop at red lights. They yield the right of way. They tend to be a less intense population group as a whole than their New England counterparts. And they have no illusions whatsoever about sports.

The fans there are rabid, don't get me wrong. But Clevelanders know about losing. Losing is their middle name. Aside from an indoor soccer team in the mid-1980s, they haven't come close to a championship in sports since the early 1960s. You can look it up.

They've had strong football teams in the 1980s (and football is religion in Ohio), but even in those couple of years when they should have gone to the Super Bowl, the Browns found horrible ways to lose and torture their long-suffering fans.

I won't even discuss the Indians because that is a franchise that ought to be ashamed of itself.

FANS EYE VIEW

A DAMN GOOD TRY

The Cavaliers are a solid and exciting team now, as every Celtics fan is lamenting, and they could win the title this year or next, maybe. They are certainly good enough. Their fans are loud and ready.

But what decades of disappointment has done to Cleveland is make it a region resigned to defeat. The fans there don't expect to win. They are happy when their teams put on a strong showing. My mother-in-law, a long-time Clevelander (and proud of it) sums it up when she has told me over the years, "At least they gave it a good try."

That attitude sums up what happens to sports fans who can no longer stand the pain and anguish of defeat. Sometimes you eat the bear, sometimes the bear eats you.

And with the Celtics taking another pre-Finals exit in the playoffs this season, it seems appropriate to consider the subtle changing waves of being a sports nut.

Losing year after year after year takes the edge off in most cities. The fans stop coming, the sports pages aren't instant breakfast, the hysteria filters off into the ozone.

Could this happen here? Could Boston sports fans ever resign themselves to defeat?

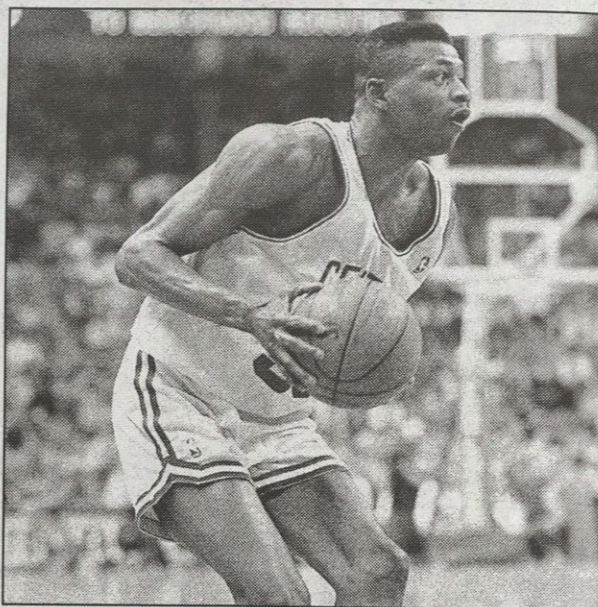
The Red Sox took heartbreak to a whole new level in '86 and have teased and appeased and released us ever since. The Patriots' Super Bowl appearance (did that really happen?) is ancient history. The Bruins are solid,

fun and an ice enigma. No titles since Nixon was in the White House.

The Celtics haven't been in the Finals since 1987. This season was a strange roller coaster ride that crested at just the right time. You would have to be a total cynic or as unsophisticated a fan as there is, not to appreciate what a great run this team put together.

To extend what appears to be a fantastic Cleveland team to seven games after the magnificent season-ending run to the division title is nothing short of a major accomplishment. If the Celtics don't get a parade through the streets of Boston, it's a shame. Because they gave us way more than our money's worth.

But let's face it, we are a region badly in need of a championship. This ain't Cleveland folks. And for you readers around the country, if you don't understand sports as narcotic, come spend a few weeks here in Beantown.



A man named Reggie blossomed into a real (not just potential anymore) superstar right in front of the entire basketball-watching public.

Turn on your radio to any random AM station or unfold your *Globe* or *Herald* and you'll start to catch on.

The people here believe it is a birthright to win titles, most particularly NBA titles. Have you ever seen a game broadcast from Boston Garden that doesn't open with a shot of those 16 banners? I swear when the national anthem is sung the lyrics change to "Oh say do those championship banners yet waaaaave, oer the land of the Green and the home team's parquet."

The losing turned to winning this year but it perhaps made the final exit all that much more frustrating. After watching the Celtics stumble around without Larry, Kevin and Dee Brown for months, more than a few folks folded their tents (including me for a few depressing moments).

But this team wasn't through just yet. They pulled together and made their run. They showed savvy, guile, a willingness to dig in and play tough defense, a belief in themselves and their ability to win.

A man named Reggie blossomed into a real (not just potential anymore) superstar right in front of the entire basketball-watching public. Kevin came back, Dee came back. Even Larry came back.

Game Six against Cleveland on a spring night in the Garden let it all come together. It was a shining moment, a glorious evening when all that we had hoped for this team came true in 48 unspeakably superb minutes of playoff hysteria.

That the dream crashed and burned in Cleveland two days later is all that some fans around here can remember. That our heroic front line of Bird, Parish and McHale got skunked in Game 7 is burned into core memory. What a shame.

Nobody hates losing more than a Celtics fan. But this Celtics fan is not going to give in to the pettiness of unhappiness. This particular team may just rank up there with my favorites of all time. Seeing John Bagley get his magic moments. Seeing Ed Pinckney take his bows. Seeing Larry, Chief and Kevin out there together for what may be the last time. Seeing Reggie get off the jump shot into the future.

They gave it a damn good try. That will carry me. ●

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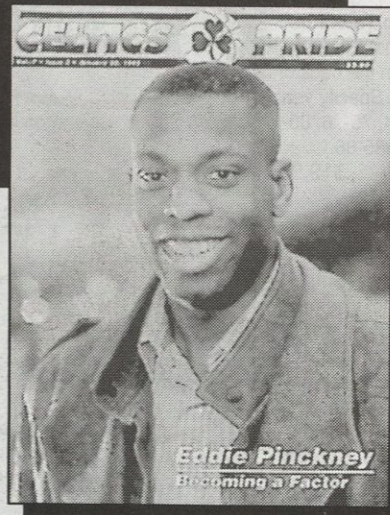
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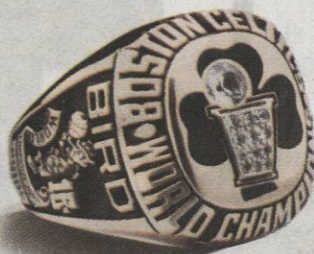


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